THE WRITING WORKSHOP: EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS' SELF-REPORTED ATTITUDES TOWARD SELF-CONCEPT, SELF-ESTEEM, AND WRITING COMPETENCY

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by Kristen R. Crabtree
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An abstract of a Thesis by
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Eighth grade girls, as part of their language arts class, were surveyed regarding attitudes toward the writing workshop experience in the fall of 1999 and the spring of 2000. Survey data, collected from forced-choice and open-ended items, included comparison to the American Association of University Women's (1990) study, attitudes related to the school environment, and the effects of writing workshop. Descriptive statistics found significance in the areas of academic self-esteem, attitudes toward teacher feedback, attitudes toward the writing workshop environment, perceptions of writing competency, and attitudes toward writing workshop teacher feedback. Recommendations for educators based on survey findings have been included.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

> "Ms. Jones, I have to tell you something. Last year I had a really hard time with school and stuff. This year I decided I was going to go on a search for myself. I found my journey through my writing. If I didn't have this notebook, I don't know what I'd do. This is me." (personal communication, May 28, 1999)

On the last day of eighth grade, Katrina (name changed) stopped by her language arts classroom after all other students had left the building. She just had to tell something to her writing workshop teacher. She thanked the teacher for showing her how to find her voice, a voice she never thought she had. Finding her voice through writing gave Katrina the opportunity to express her true self. She gained inner strength; she was whole.

In educational settings there has been increased attention given to developmental experiences of females and how their education differs from males. Many studies over the past decade have linked a decline in girls' self-concept and self-esteem to societal pressures and educational inequities. Girls are held to high standards of morality and educational success; they are expected to be "good girls." "Good girls" comply with rules, speak when spoken to and care for others more than themselves.

Unfortunately, becoming this "good girl" requires sacrifice. Young girls play enthusiastically, laugh gregariously, and speak their thoughts and feelings. They do not edit words or behaviors. As girls grow, society's behavioral norms are

encouraged and enforced through home, school, and other institutions. Girls are continually reminded to sit quietly, to lower their voices, to calm down. Girls who comply are rewarded for being good; girls who resist are labeled "bad girls." Not meeting the needs of transescent students "often results in alienation from school, loss of general self-esteem and a sense of belonging. . . ." (National Middle School Association, 2000, p.1).

The American Association of University Women (1990) reports 60 percent of elementary aged girls say they feel "happy the way I am," but by middle school the percentage drops to only 37 percent and then to 29 percent by high school (p. 1). What happens between elementary school and high school to cause such a drop in self-esteem?

Traditionally, transescence is the developmental stage where independent identity formation occurs. It is a time of inner reflection, of finding one's place in the world, the formation of identity. An author of early adolescent development, Caissy (1994) explains:

> One of the most important tasks a child must accomplish during early adolescence is the achievement of an identity. . . . During early adolescence, children begin to look inward to see who they are. . . . During the process of discovering who they are and their role in the world around them, early adolescents are in constant inward turmoil, experiencing much confusion, many paradoxes, and many emotional ups and downs. (p. 66)

Caissy's words model the classic psychological approach to young adolescence. Piaget's work (1965) has shown females' natural ability to follow and comply with rules (as cited in Gilligan, 1993). Erikson (1950) has looked at adolescence as a time for discovery of a sense of self (as cited in Gilligan, 1993). Kohlberg (1969) has resolved that girls are more willing to compromise and

resolve disputes in order to maintain relationships (as cited in Gilligan, 1993). These studies are based on male development, so their results find females who are different less developmentally and morally mature.

However, research on females by Gilligan (1993) finds girls' maturation and moral development is linked to their relationships. "Intimacy goes along with identity, as the female comes to know herself as she is known, through her relationships with others" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 12). In order to maintain critical relationships (family, friends, school), girls will conform to societal standards of goodness. The voices that girls hear are in "the context of her various social relationships and social interactions -- voices engaged in the ongoing dialogue that constitutes the culture in which she lives" (Brown, 1998, p. 106). Family and school are factors that have the greatest impact on girls' self-concept and self-esteem according to the American Association of University Women (1990). The voices of family and teachers adhering to societal standards of femininity are often echoing in girls' ears as they model their behavior and make choices.

By early adolescence, girls are caught between a false, silent self and an outgoing, isolated self. Societal voices are often conflicting. The American culture encourages strength, self-identity, and confidence. While these virtues are encouraged in males, they are discouraged in females. At the "edge of adolescence, girls seem most acutely conscious of the expectations to conform to ideal femininity and are most likely to express frustration with and resist demands placed on them" (Brown, 1998, p. 124). With the onset of puberty, girls are forced into critical identity-forming decisions: resist the "good girls" image or capitulate to society's demands. Neither choice offers a life without negative consequences. Losing a respectable reputation, losing a relationship, or losing one's true self are critical issues to which young adolescent girls must attend.

Pipher (1994), in her seminal study of transescent females' loss of self-esteem, describes the developmental stage differently than Caissy (1994):

> Something dramatic happens to girls in early adolescence. Just as planes and ships disappear mysteriously into the Bermuda Triangle, so do the selves of girls go down in droves. They crash and burn in a social and developmental Bermuda Triangle. . . . They lose their resiliency and optimism and become less curious and inclined to take risks. (p. 19)

Pipher (1994) and Gilligan (1982) seem to reflect the findings of AAUW. Girls' high self-esteem falters with the onset of transescence. Girls' developmental experiences are different than boys. Girls have relational pressures which influence identity development. The conflicting message: find yourself but be quiet about it, can lead girls to a disconnect with their true selves. Plus, if girls' identity is directly related to their relationships, creating an independent identity seems a formidable task without support from those who are valued.

The loss of self-concept and self-esteem can also be linked to the educational experiences of transescent girls. Sadker and Sadker (1992) have discovered that in a typical classroom, "male students are more often stars and female students are more often stifled." Boys receive teacher attention at ratio of eight to one as compared to girls (p. 48). Unlike their counterparts, high achieving girls are the least recognized members of a classroom. Myra Sadker, who recently died from breast cancer, states in the book Failing at Fairness, "If the cure for cancer is forming in the mind of one of our daughters, it is less likely to become a reality than if it is forming in the mind of one of our sons. Until this changes, everybody loses" (1994, p. 14). As girls receive less attention from teachers and peers and more pressure to model the "good girl" image, they

become invisible. The ultimate result of invisibility is lower self-concept and diminished self-esteem.

> (Girls) need a nurturing environment which welcomes their unique voices and gives them plenty of room to question, share confusions and open up to express their true feelings and thoughts. In coeducational settings, adolescent girls often end up being silenced as young males dominate the teacher's focus and conversations. (Naff & Fones, 1998, p. 3)

Interestingly, early adolescent girls do resist and do resent silencing their true selves. Since speaking out loud can carry negative consequences, girls turn to writing as a means of authentic expression. A diary often brings solace. This literary arena has a history of protecting girls' thoughts, feelings and secrets. Though Brown and Gilligan (1992) find young adolescence girls "have been observed to lose their vitality, their resilience, their immunity to depression, their sense of themselves and their character" (p. 2), the researchers do recognize girls' self-retrieval of voice through writing and speaking in safe environments. Girls' speaking voices may go underground, but their thoughts and feelings are evident on the written page. Seeing their thoughts in writing can bring back a sense of validation, of being important, of being human. Girls need "to write expressively, regularly, quickly, without evaluation. . . . In this way they will have a chance to discover and develop their deepest convictions, apart from concern with what their friends may feel, apart from what they think they should feel (Barbieri, 1996, p. 4).

Writing can afford the opportunity for girls to assert themselves, to create an independent identity. Writing allows connection to girls' inner thoughts and feelings without fear of audience recrimination. Writing is voice. Writing is resistance. Writing allows girls the chance to make sense of their world.

Pipher (1994), who uses writing as a counseling strategy with her female clients, states:

> Girls this age love to write. Their journals are places where they can be honest and whole. In their writing, they can clarify, conceptualize and evaluate their experiences. Writing their thoughts and feelings strengthens their sense of self. Their journals are a place where their point of view on the universe matters. (Reviving Ophelia, p. 255)

Writing offers transescent girls the opportunity for self-discovery, giving girls the feeling of strong self-concept and positive self-esteem. "Writing quickly, without the onus of evaluation, girls are often able to define what is most important to them and to examine what is going on in their lives" (Barbieri, 1996. p. 5). Girls need the opportunity to write "for their delight alone" (Woolf, 1929, p. 66).

Typically, when young adolescent girls enter writing workshop classrooms, they come with a low opinion of themselves, both as writers and as capable students. They have mastered critical survival skills: sitting silently during class discussion, writing action stories that are not "boring," creating a false writing voice -- all deliberate behaviors learned to maintain a sense of compliance, to keep friends, to be "good girls." Unfortunately, those same survival skills have forced girls to create masks, false selves. The authentic self of girls has become invisible.

The National Middle School Association (2000) recognizes transescent students have seven key developmental needs:

- positive social interaction with adults and peers
- structure and clear limits
- physical activity

- creative expression
- competence and achievement
- meaningful participation in families and school communities
- opportunities for self-definition (Scales, 1991, as cited in National Middle School Association, p.1)

A writing workshop atmosphere can meet those developmental needs better than a traditional language arts classroom. Atwell (1998), a renowned writing workshop practitioner, believes:

> When the content of an English course is ideas -- thinking and learning through writing, reading, listening, and talking -- and when students in the course pursue their own ideas and purposes in the company of friends and their teacher, the middle school English classroom has the potential to become an extraordinarily interesting place. This place is a workshop, a way of teaching and learning uniquely suited to young adolescents of every ability. (p.71)

Workshop learning is individualized and supported by a community of learners where the teacher functions as both facilitator and learner. "A workshop approach accommodates adolescents' needs, invites their independence, challenges them to grow up and transforms the status quo" (Atwell, 1998, p. 71).

Writing workshop can create an environment of safety where transescent girls are free to speak and write with a supportive audience. Since their speaking voice has been silenced, a writing voice is the best chance for girls to express themselves. Girls' writing "represent(s) their best hope of articulating their real thinking and feeling" (Barbieri, 1996, p. 6). "(G)irls search for safe places to speak, and for audiences that welcome, rather than judge their speech" (Bishop,

1996, p. 13). Writing workshop can provide an environment for girls to think, to write, to speak.

Through individual or small group conferencing and written feedback from the teacher and student-selected peers, girls can write their true selves, use their true voices. They find an identity. Barbieri (1996), both a writing workshop teacher and a participant in the Brown and Gilligan study (1992), has experienced the power of writing workshop. Barbieri, an educator who values girls' self-expression and writing competency in writing workshop, writes, "I have become convinced that responsive teaching, coupled with real immersion into literacy, a more sensitive attention to literacy -- reading, writing, and talking -- may enable our girls to weather the hurricane (of adolescence) intact. . . " (p. 1).

Although the teacher takes a supportive role in a writing workshop, she/he is responsible for setting a nurturing stage where girls' voices (written and spoken) are solicited and valued. Writing workshop is a vehicle for self-discovery, a journey to define one's place in a community, an opportunity for girls to dream and self-actualize their dreams. "If girls are to succeed, we cannot ignore their need to voice what they know, and the ways authentic speech connects them to themselves and those they trust" (Bishop, 1996, p. 15).

Voice, both written and spoken, gives identity and connects oneself with inner thoughts and feelings. "Voice is like a fingerprint, unique to the writer yet not easily discriminated" (Blair, 1998, p. 11). Because the loss of voice creates a disconnect with society and self, writing workshop empowers girls to reconnect with themselves and their community. Since society tends to silence girls' speaking voices, it seems only natural to encourage girls to discover their writing voice. A writing voice can transition girls from silence to speech, from invisibility to identity with confidence and competence.

Virginia Woolf (1929) charges, "A thousand pens are ready to suggest what you should do and what effect you will have" (p. 117). Katrina, the young girl quoted at the beginning of this chapter, has taken up Woolf's invitation to write. She is yet unaware of the public effect her words will have, but she knows the personal significance. Her fluorescent pink pen fills a tear-stained, mud-splattered, steno book with fears, hopes, struggles and triumphs. Katrina's voice lives in the pages of that notebook. She lovingly tucks her precious words into her backpack like a child carefully packing her favorite teddy bear. "I take this everywhere with me. I even sleep with it" (personal communication, May 28, 1999). Katrina's words may never become public, may never be spoken; but the penned thoughts have taken a transitory step. Katrina's voice is no longer hidden. Her words "make the silent world more real than the world of speech" (Woolf, 1929, p. 114).

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to determine if writing workshop raises girls' self-esteem by elevating their self-concept and perceptions of writing competency. A writing workshop approach provides curricular learning in a safe and nurturing environment that recognizes developmental and societal factors and seeks to meet the unique needs of young adolescent girls as writers and humans.

Research Questions

The specific research questions that shape this study follow:

1. What effect does writing workshop have on girls' self-concept, self-esteem, and writing competency?
2. Does writing workshop afford coping strategies for girls to deal with societal pressures, allowing them to maintain their true identity?
3. Do girls use their authentic voice in writing workshop pieces?

4. Can writing workshop create a gender-fair learning environment free of stereotypes and destructive experiences?

Null Hypothesis

There will be no difference in girls' self-reported perceptions on self-concept, self-esteem, and writing competency before and after writing workshop experiences.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that all of the girls in the study have received the same instruction and opportunity in their writing workshop experience.
2. It is assumed that the writing workshop classroom provides a gender-fair learning environment.
3. The researcher assumes that all girls are mature enough to accurately judge and mark perceptions of self-concept, self-esteem, and writing competency on survey instruments.
4. The researcher assumes that all girls are honest and candid with regard to responses to survey items.
5. The researcher assumes that all girls understand what writing workshop is and how it differs from a traditional language arts instructional approach.

Limitations

Several threats to validity exist in the design of the study.

1. Girls reported their opinions and perceptions on the pre-survey and post survey. It is possible the girls' responses reflected their attitudes toward the teacher, their school or another aspect of the language arts classroom.
2. The girls were in different classes throughout the day so their educational experiences, in general, could differ.

3. There was no control group with which to compare survey responses.

4. The number of respondents might limit the generalizability of the study to other female populations.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the subsequent terms were defined as follows:

Adolescence. Girls, typically ages 10 to 18, experience the developmental stage of puberty (Woolfolk, 1995, p. 98). At this time they will achieve physical and sexual maturity and become less dependent on peer acceptance.

Literacy. In today's world there are many types of literacy. For the purpose of this study, literacy will be defined as the ability to read, write, speak, and create meaning through the use of language.

Self-concept. Self-concept conveys the perception one holds of herself based on the roles she plays at home, school, and community. Self-concept includes the attributes one believes she possesses.

Self-esteem. One's personal beliefs and values determine self-esteem. Self-esteem measures the level of satisfaction one has with regard to feelings of self-concept.

Transescence. Also termed early adolescence or young adolescence, transescence is the developmental stage, ages 10-14, marking the onset of puberty. Due to the extreme rush of hormones from the endocrine and pituitary glands this age is subject to growth spurts, emotional highs and lows, and an intense awareness of physical appearance. Acceptance by peers is an overwhelmingly influential factor in behavior.

Voice. Examining the essence of eighth grade girls' writing voice, Blair (1998) explains, "A writer's voice has many meanings. It is the print of the writer on the piece. It reflects what she knows, who she is, what she values, fears, and considers. It is her way of thinking and making decisions" (15). In the context of this study, voice means the author's authentic self is reflected in her written and spoken words.

Writing workshop. The workshop approach to the teaching of language arts puts the teacher in a facilitator role. The strategy is student-centered and focuses on a personal exploration of meaning through writing.

Outline of Procedures

The study of the effects of writing workshop on transescent girls' perceptions regarding self-concept, self-esteem, and writing competency was undertaken during the 1999-2000 school year.

- AAUW's survey (1990) items were used. In addition, writing workshop questions were modeled after the AAUW survey to tie components of the survey together.
- The teacher/researcher administered a pre-treatment survey 103 eighth graders from five language arts classes in early September, the second day of school. The pre-treatment survey was administered prior to implementation of a workshop approach.
- No discussion of the survey occurred until the end of the year and the administration of the post treatment survey.
- Forty-nine surveys were used in the study. Subjects were female and were present for both administrations of the survey.

- As part of the language arts curriculum, students were exposed to a variety of thematic units. Each unit incorporated multiple genre, multi-cultural writers and young adolescent experiences.
- A reading and writing workshop was infused with the thematic units. At all times, literature from thematic units was connected to individual students' reading and writing.
- Skills and concepts relating to reading, writing and the language arts curriculum were discussed when appropriate and were always connected to students' reading, writing and the thematic units.
- The teacher/researcher functioned in the role of facilitator, supporter and learner.
- Students set individual goals according to minimum requirements, held peer and teacher conferences, experienced a variety of reading, writing and speaking opportunities and created a writing portfolio.
- Great care was taken by the researcher/teacher to create a gender-fair environment where all voices were solicited and valued.
- A post treatment survey was administered in May, after the completion and sharing of portfolios.
- Quantitative data were measured with descriptive statistics, and qualitative data was collated by subject and theme

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To explore the literature surrounding the effects of writing workshop three areas received focus: (1) self-concept and self-esteem with regard to societal expectations, (2) girls' educational experience and the effect on self-concept and self-esteem, and (3) the effect of writing workshop on self-concept and self-esteem. Throughout the review of literature, a common theme emerged. Girls began to lose their voice in childhood and continued into transescence feeling coerced, repressed, and silenced.

Although much of the literature has used the terms self-concept and self-esteem interchangeably, for the purposes of this review, the two terms are defined by two distinct meanings. Beane and Lipka (1980a) illustrated the necessity of differentiating between the two definitions:

> Self-concept may consist of any number of personal attributes which may be classified by some criteria as representing presence of absence of some skill or attribute. However, reporting of the attribute does not necessarily reveal actual self-esteem. Actual self-esteem can only be determined by eliciting the value of relative priority which the individual attaches to the attribute. Self-concept without the latter can only be construed as representing inferred self-esteem when another individual attaches some conventional or personal ranking to the attribute. (p.5)

The distinction between self-concept and self-esteem was also recognized by Caissy (1994). Caissy defined self-concept as "how a person views herself" and self-esteem as "how a person feels about herself" (p. 42). Feelings of inferiority, whether real or perceived, contributed to the development of unhealthy self-concept and low self-esteem. To Caissy there were three reasons why adolescents felt inferior: "unattractiveness, having few or no friends and perceiving oneself as unintelligent" (p. 41). The perception of unintelligence could originate from many social contexts including school. In the classroom when girls' writings, their voices, were not recognized or valued, females gradually took on silence as a coping mechanism, feeling they were inferior. In addition, when girls silenced their voices, feelings of healthy self-concept and self-esteem deteriorated.

An inquiry of the literature surrounding self-esteem demonstrated a common limitation that should be understood as a caution. Instruments used to measure self-concept and self-esteem often relied on subjects giving honest responses. Beane and Lipka (1980b) questioned the approach many researchers have taken to examine self-perception. To them, many procedures or instruments did not take respondents out of the research setting. It has been difficult to determine if "the respondents even think of themselves in terms of the attributes or situations presented?" (p. 87). In other words, were subjects' responses honest, reflective of the survey situation or given according to perceived societal expectations? Since research has shown girls' identity has been directly linked to relationships, some limitation must be assumed. Girls might be less likely to answer honestly on self-reported surveys. The need to please the instrument administrator, the need to comply with rules, and the need to create a positive impression could cause girls to alter their responses.

Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, and Societal Relationships:

Gilligan (1993) investigated female moral development in relation to historical literature regarding human moral development. By interviewing 144 subjects, including males, in three studies (college study, abortion decision study, and rights and responsibilities study) Gilligan found classic psychological literature was neither objective nor accurate with regard to female development. In fact, females were socialized to become selfless and voiceless, and any female who did not adhere to those attributes was regarded as immoral or morally immature. Gilligan also recognized that women and girls saw themselves in relation to others, unwilling to speak out for fear of compromising relationships. As girls matured, they were continually exposed to situations where their opinions were either ignored or not validated. In response, women became silent. "(T)he secrets of the female adolescent pertain to the silencing of her own voice, a silencing enforced by the wish not to hurt others but also by the fear that, in speaking, her voice will not be heard" (p. 51). Even though society has currently proclaimed equal educational opportunity for women, the reality has been that women could not and cannot speak freely when faced with the loss of critical relationships and societal expectations of femininity.

As they continued the research about female development, Brown and Gilligan (1992) observed and interviewed 100 Laurel School girls for ten years, from childhood to young adulthood. They found girls caught in a "common struggle against losing something which feels essential: their voice, their mind, their self" (p. 159). Though planning to run an objective study according to experimental norms of psychological study design, Brown and Gilligan found it impossible to maintain an objective distance. Subjects did not respond openly and honestly with the researchers until they interacted with the girls as persons

and created a bond. Abandoning the control-experimental groups and the objective questions, the well-trained interviewers allowed the girls to speak freely. At this point the researchers were able to "move where the girls led" them (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 19).

> Following the girls' voices, we listened for girls' sense of themselves -- the way they spoke of themselves, the presence and absence of an 'I' in their stories of relational conflicts. . . . Listening to girls' voices, we heard the degree to which morality, in a male-voiced culture and a male-governed society, justifies certain psychologically debilitating moves which girls and women are encouraged to make in relationships and creates internal as well as external barriers to girls' ability to speak in relationships and move freely in the world. (p. 21)

To maintain the integrity of the study, researchers listened to each interview four times, each time with a different purpose. Brown and Gilligan verified Gilligan's (1982) earlier work regarding female moral development, the need for intimate relationships, and the silencing of voice. In summary, society encouraged a "feminine ideal" of "self- sacrifice, self-silencing" personas which girls were unable to fulfill comfortably (p. 40). Girls found themselves feeling disconnected, feeling like they were not able to speak or act like the way they wanted. The pressure to conform created the need to hide thoughts and silence words. Neeti, one of the subjects, exhibited this phenomenon when she stated, "The voice that stands up for what I believe has been buried deep inside me" (p. 40).

Could girls ever reconnect with themselves without the fear of losing peer relationships? Street (1981) measured the self-concept of 493 high school

students, grades nine to twelve, who were administered the Self Symbols Social Task (Ziller, Henderson, & Long, 1973, as cited in Street, 1981, p. 316). Statistically significant differences were found among grade levels and gender with regard to social development. Ultimately, grade ten seemed to be the crucial point at which self-identity was formulated for both males and females. However, females were more bound by their social relationships than males and perceived more facets of self (a verbal measure showing recognition of multiple attributes that create a self-perception). By twelfth grade, students need for peer approval and acceptance was less influential. Street recommended school programs which took into account the developmental differences of grade levels and genders of students.

To expand knowledge on self-concept, Street (1988) administered the Trait Evaluation Scale, a self-created measurement where students evaluated themselves on a one to ten scale for ten traits. Then students chose five other people to rate them. The population consisted of 80 second semester seniors, since they would be less likely to be influenced by peer acceptance but would feel anxiety with regard to their future. The study involved both experimental and control groups and explored whether students would change any aspect of self-concept more than others because of feedback they received. Street found students "appeared to be willing to change all the aspects of self-concept to more closely align with the evaluations they received in feedback from significant others," but there was no significant difference found between the different aspects of self-concept (p. 455). Reliability and validity could be questionable with a self-made instrument, but the study did compare with other literature depicting an influential relationship between feedback and perceptions of self.

How does feedback directly affect self-esteem? Gergen (1965), in a seminal study, examined conditions affecting how people publicly present themselves. Gergen recognized social reinforcement was a major determining factor in the creation of public selves and could create an internal conflict as people try to remain "true to self" while accommodating various social expectations (p. 413). Study participants were interviewed and exposed to a variety of conditions: 1) reflective feedback was received or was not received, 2) feedback was delivered in either a personal or impersonal manner, and 3) encouragement was given toward being honest about themselves or making a good impression with the interviewer (p. 413). Simply stated, consistent and continuous supportive feedback could help students clarify values which determined and ultimately created their self-concepts.

Gergen hypothesized subjects would adjust their descriptions of self to make a positive impression, some being aware of their adjustments, others oblivious. The study found statistically significant support that "social feedback in the form of reflective reinforcement is effective in increasing the positiveness of self-evaluations" (p. 421). Personal connection with the interviewer had little influence on the respondents answers, and many of the subjects were unaware of the modifications they made to their self-presentations. Great care was given to the generalizability of the study, multiple instruments were used to compare and test results. However, the degree to which changes in self-image were made and whether the changes were self-deprecating were not measured. Implications of Gergen's study, however, indicated that personalized positive feedback could give girls a stronger sense of self.

Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, and School

An examination of girls' self-concept and self-esteem should begin at the elementary or earliest educational level. At what age did girls experience and internalize gender-bias in school? The American Association of University Women (AAUW, 1990) created national awareness to the issue of girls' self-esteem through the report, "Expectations and Aspirations: Gender Roles and Self-Esteem". A nationwide survey of 3000 randomly selected students from grades four through ten revealed differences between boys and girls in self-esteem, body perception, academic confidence, career expectations, and self-worth. Boys and girls began adolescence with confidence and positive feelings of self-worth, but more boys left the developmental stage with high self-esteem than girls. "(Girls) emerge from adolescence with a poor self-image, constrained views of their future and their place in society, and much less confidence about themselves and their abilities" (p. 4). Girls' self-esteem fell 31 percentage points while 46 percent of boys maintain their high self-esteem. Girls and boys considered females to be quieter, less smart, and less powerful than males. A social undercurrent encouraged active participation in school and society by boys but discouraged the same behaviors in girls. AAUW found self-esteem was directly related to academic success, career choice and participation in school and society. Girls' low self-esteem was linked to their limited participation in school and community and the inability to reach their full potential.

Expanding on results from the AAUW report, Sadker and Sadker (1994) compared the educational experiences of girls and boys. The study, which examined 100 classrooms of fourth, sixth, and eighth graders in five states for three years, found that "boys and girls receive very different educations" (p. 1). A culture of sexism taught girls "the lessons of silence" (p. 10).

> Each time a girl opens a book and reads a womanless history, she learns she is worth less. Each time the teacher passes over a girl to elicit the ideas and opinions of boys, that girl is conditioned to be silent and to defer. As teachers use their expertise to question, praise, probe, clarify, and correct boys, they help these male students sharpen ideas, refine their thinking, gain their voice, and achieve more. . . Through this curriculum of sexism they (girls) are turned into educational spectators instead of players, but education is not a spectator sport. (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 13)

Sadker and Sadker's study of girls' experiences could be generalized across the nation. Due to trained observers and interviewers as well as a multi-year study of a diverse population, the results must be considered reliable and valid. Through school experiences, girls' voices were diminished, dismissed and devalued. They were silenced.

In School Girls, Orenstein (1994) examined the experiences of middle school girls in an urban and suburban setting. Through interviews and observations she delved into the world of female transescence. Orenstein described alarming scenes where girls silenced themselves to avoid failure and ridicule (hiding self-perceived faults), to comply with societal expectations (being a "good girl"), to maintain friendships, to survive. Observations of study participants showed disturbing examples of girls sacrificing their selves. One girl refused to cough, holding her breath, fearing others would make fun of her. Another girl, sensing the hopelessness of classroom inclusion, used "her silence as an advantage; as long as she's perceived as shy, her teachers won't notice that she has, in truth, disengaged from school" (p. 80).

Orenstein also found that girls who did speak out were considered troublemakers, disruptions. They were either scolded or ignored, unlike their male counterparts who received more attention from teachers and parents. Because of coerced anonymity, girls' feelings of academic self-esteem plunged downward during adolescence, matching the decline of other concepts of self. Girls who silenced themselves were not able to fully participate in their education. Denying themselves learning opportunities compounded the loss of their intellectual potential.

After years of social and school pressures in gender-biased environments, girls have concluded they are less capable. Pipher (1994) revealed that girls attributed their successes to good luck and hard work, not ability. Failure added to feelings of inadequacy and confidence subsequently disintegrated. By adolescence, girls had encountered familial, social, and institutional pressures. They could not conform without losing themselves. Girls tended to deal with overwhelming anxiety by withdrawing. "They screen out the world to give themselves time to process all the complexity" (p. 95). "Their voices have gone underground -- their speech is more tentative and less articulate" (p. 20). Pipher used many forms of writing with her clients to bring back their voices: journals, lists of strengths, setting goals, etc. All of these strategies gave girls the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts. With a concerned and attentive audience, Pipher found that adolescent girls rediscovered and reclaimed their voices.

Would a new-found voice increase writing competency? How would self-esteem be affected? Grodnick (1996) observed no significant correlation between student self-esteem levels and proficiency levels in writing. In a review of the literature, Grodnick found a connection between self-esteem and academic

achievement, including writing competency. The researcher conducted a study of 50 randomly selected college Composition I students. Grodnick found "the level of self-esteem did not impact significantly on the writing proficiency level" by comparing scores from the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, New Jersey College Skills Placement Test and course writing grades for the fall semester. In addition, Grodnick (1996) identified "a high general self-concept is shown not to be a valid indicator of a high level of writing ability" (p. 11). Analysis of this study must include the brief time frame and the lack of authentic assessment. A writing workshop measured by standardized testing could be viewed as limiting, but Grodnick did not discuss how course grades were determined. However, if proficiency in writing is not determined by self-esteem, a writing workshop could be the opportune place for girls to explore and take risks without fear of failure.

Writing Workshop and Social Constructs

Studies have shown girls experience gender bias early in their school experiences. How could an environment favoring males affect girls' writing? Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1991) studied gender bias in elementary school. Using 180 randomly selected first through fourth grade writings from a Young Author's Conference representing 12 metropolitan schools, The researchers found "strong stereotypic thinking and male predominance in the stories of young children" (p. 36). Careful attention was given to diversity. Samples came from different ethnic, gender, cultural, and socio-economic groups. Children's pieces were analyzed for use of male and female characters in free choice and prompt writing. With an interrater reliability of 84-97 percent, the researchers discovered children's natural inclination to write characters with rigid stereotypical attributes. Male characters were the main characters, the

aggressors, the problem solvers. Both boys and girls when given prompts reversing gender stereotypical behavior changed the gender as the story progressed.

"Gender stereotypic models permeate a young child's environment and can be seen in children's literature, in television programs, in school texts, in toy manufacture and in language" (Trepanier-Street & Romatowski, 1991, p. 34). Many studies have shown how children's thinking could be influenced by environmental stimuli. This study demonstrated how quickly children have been socialized into gender stereotypical thinking. How that gender stereotypical thinking affected self-esteem was not measured in this study, but the authors recommended writing workshop facilitators maintain awareness of gender stereotypical thinking and encourage more balance and flexibility so girls, too, could feel important and equal.

Phinney (1998) examined the socio-political world of female writers. While observing kindergarten girls, Phinney noticed "an undercurrent that has the potential to affect children's notions about how the act of writing is defined, what constraints can inhibit their personal voice -- their 'writing themselves' -- and how engagement in writing in social settings can potentially affect their relationships with their peers" (p. 20). The girls included each other as characters in their stories, but the writer was not given the authority to determine which friend would be which character. First choice of being the littlest was not always granted, but being the prettiest seemed to be acceptable compensation.

Debra: (answering before Ruth)

Yes,

could I be the littlest? (Jess looks sharply at Debra)

Ruth: Could I be the littlest?

Jess: It's not about people.

Ruth: All right. . .

Jess: It's about puppies.

Debra: I'll be. . .

Ruth: I wanna be the littlest in Jess's play about the puppies.

(Debra looks unhappy as she speaks)

Jess: (speaking quickly)

I'm the littlest in the play about puppies

(takes a quick, loud breath signaling she has more to say)

Debra: And can I be the se. . . (second littlest)

Ruth and Debra: (simultaneously) And can I be the second littlest?

Jess: (cutting in hastily)

All right,

(pointing with marker to Ruth)

Ruth can be the second littlest

(then, waving marker toward Debra, but not looking at her. . .)

You'll be the third littlest.

Debra: Am I old?

Jess: Three.

Ruth: And how big am I gonna be?

Debra: But I asked first, Jess.

Jess: Two.

Debra: But, Jess, I asked first.

Jess: (slaps book open and snatches cap off marker)

It's my book. . . .

And the littlest is the prettiest,

I can tell you that. . . .

The biggest is,

um,

the prettiest. (Phinney, 1998, pp. 23-24)

"Jess worked hard to maintain control of her story and held off the pressure for some time" (24). Eventually she compromised, giving more importance to her social needs than her autonomous needs as an author. She appeased her friends' demands and smoothed their hurt feelings by giving the littlest part to one and the prettiest part to another.

Debra, new to the group, "was not only forced to lose her 'voice,' but to suspend her own sense of reality in order to cope with the changes that were forced upon her" (Phinney, 1998, p. 4). Previously she had asked Jess to be in her story. They were going to be "zero months old" (p. 25). Ruth wanted to be in the story, too, and Debra needed someone older to take care of the baby characters. Debra told Ruth she could be eight. Ruth threatened to change Debra's status in her story so Debra submitted, trying to maintain membership in the relationship. She was blackmailed by people she desperately wanted as friends. "Both the content and ownership of her (Debra's) stories was affected" and she learned "that writing was a practice that sometimes had to be significantly compromised in order to be acceptable to others (p. 25). Phinney's study, though limited to three girls, reflected the social pressures girls feel. Even when given free choice in writing, socially vulnerable girls will compromise or sacrifice their voice to maintain social relationships.

With a continuing emphasis on elementary females, Henkin (1995) studied gender and equity issues with first graders in a writing workshop. Nineteen middle class first graders were observed in writing workshop for a school year.

Students were interviewed in front of each other. Those public interviews might have affected the honesty of student responses. However, even with a limited population and an interview process which could have invited bias, data from field notes, video and audio tapes, and interviews showed overwhelming evidence of discrimination and inequity. Although the observed teacher believed the classroom to be democratic, several literacy clubs evolved with membership dependent on social status and gender. Gender seemed to be the overriding factor. "The way the boys saw it, girls were simply not adequate partners, and they held to this view even when girls were writing about sports" (p. 430). The girls overheard boys' comments but did not challenge them.

During the girls' interviews, Henkin had to "ask the boys to sit down and let the girls speak for themselves" (p. 431). Despite the teacher's intentions, this classroom was not democratic, and even Henkin plunged into a condescending stereotype. "When asked to discuss boy/girl conferences and topics, some of the girls were surprisingly articulate" (p. 431). Faced with rejection from boys and apparently the adults in the room, the girls formed their own literacy clubs. "Literacy provided the backdrop that allowed Jane and Erin's insights to be articulated. As members of a collaborative, interpretive literacy community, they had found that their voices were valued and sought after" (p. 433). Without their own group, the girls would not have been heard.

Hicks (1998), through a case study approach, summarized that writers create social meanings for themselves. One girl, a repeating first grader, was observed as she experienced a language rich, supportive writing workshop. Caught between an inner and outer world, the young girl was nudged and encouraged to write through multiple conferences with her teacher. She was

given the illusion of free choice. However, there was a social world in the classroom where certain genre were more prevalent (story writing more than journaling). Eventually, Janeen improved her writing skills. She moved from drawing to creating dictated and self-written journals and stories with detailed descriptions. Janeen's improvement in writing, her ability to develop and produce personal narratives, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle stories and science journals, was deemed successful. However, it was not discussed in the study if Janeen's progress was due to her effort to please her teacher, her need to progress to the next grade, or her authentic development as a writer with a unique voice.

How could feedback from a teacher affect girls feelings of writing competency? Could that feedback contribute to girls' perceptions of invisibility? Concentrating on response and feedback to young writers, Fleming (1995) found girls' writing pieces were not receiving equal teacher and peer validation when compared to boys' pieces. Observations over eight months, audio tapes and photocopies of stories were used to determine that "response to writing by teacher and peers can contribute to male dominance and female invisibility" (p. 1). Though Fleming used a limited population (21 white, suburban second graders) student samples of writing clearly showed bias toward topic selection, teacher response and peer validation. To begin, Frog and Toad stories by Arnold Lobel were used as generators for writing workshop. Students were individually assigned to compose one Frog and Toad story and were encouraged to create their own subject matter.

Boys tended to write adventurous survival stories where Frog and Toad battled side by side, but girls examined the relationship between Frog and Toad often inserting personal experiences. Because a biased definition determined a

good story (action stories where a major conflict was resolved) girls' stories were not published nor praised. Fleming found subtle and overt ways that silenced girls. The researcher encouraged writing teachers to recognize how girls' writing naturally differed from boys. Democratizing a classroom would not mean to make girls write like boys nor vice versa. Instead, writing differences should be publicly discussed and "applauded" (Fleming, 1995, p. 13).

As the previous study suggested, if girls' voices are being suppressed at primary grades, would it be surprising that by early adolescence they feel less equal, less validated, less worthy? Once the feelings of self-confidence, of self-worth were gone, silence replaced speech and authentic communication was prohibited.

If girls were silenced throughout their childhood, could a writing workshop in adolescence give them an attentive audience, give them the opportunity to express themselves? Finders (1996), a professed believer in writing workshop, followed two circles of seventh grade friends; read their notes, their journals, their graffiti on the bathroom walls; collected observation field notes; and conducted interviews with the girls, their families and their educators.

Finders, through this extensive qualitative study, discovered four myths inherent in the writing workshop pedagogy. The myth of inclusion: Teachers might have intended to create a classroom community, but students will soon be marked as insiders and outsiders. The myth of safe haven: No matter how safe a classroom might appear, outside political and social forces will infiltrate classroom walls. The myth of comfort: Students who felt comfortable in class still might not be willing to try new means of expression. The myth of free choice: Though teachers invited students to choose what to write, an underground social

force from peers dictated choice. Subjects' needs for belonging coerced them to choose words and subjects deemed acceptable by peers (pp. 122-124).

Though still professing the invaluable benefits of a writing workshop over the conventional approach to the teaching of language arts, Finders (1996) advised facilitators to take note of extra pressures adolescents battle everyday. "Students' selection criteria were tied to their social roles and filtered through their literate histories as students, daughters, and friends" (p. 124). The researcher advised educators to recognize the complex social and political influences on the literacy learning of young adolescent girls. These girls still have the intense desire to belong, and that need would influence girls' behaviors and decisions. A teacher's invitation to free expression might not be enough for girls to assert their own voices. They might not accepted the invitation. Female students still might need to consider which voice to use -- public or private, fearing alienation from peers.

When girls were given the invitation of free expression and accepted it, writing workshop became the vehicle for disclosing their inner thoughts and feelings. Writing workshop gave transescent girls both the freedom to make personal meaning of the world and the chance to find a meaningful place within that world. Blair (1998) found that girls expressed their "gendered lives" through writing (p. 11). The researcher observed eighth grade girls from an urban setting exposed to many gendered issues (teen pregnancy, abuse, harassment, violence, etc.). In one eighth grade classroom the "gender lines were clearly drawn. In reinforcement of the differences, the boys mimicked and mocked the girls, and the girls responded in kind. Each child was pressured to conform, and there was no consideration of acceptance of any youth who did not fit one gender category or another" (p. 12).

This was a language arts classroom full of literacy experiences, but the girls learned it was not always a safe place. The girls had enmassed portfolios full of nonfiction, poetry and fiction pieces which correlated with genre being read, but they did not consider themselves writers and were reluctant to share out loud or let the boys read their work. Having experienced ridicule in the past and subsequent silencing, the girls searched for supportive audiences (their friends) or themselves. "These girls used their free writing as a time to explore the complexities and human tragedies they perceived in life" (Blair, 1998, p. 15). Through writing, the girls were able to make personal meaning of the complex world in which they lived. They found a place and a voice, but that place was still limited and private.

What would a truly nurturing writing workshop environment look like? Boone, Farney, and Zulauf (1996) found students' negative attitudes toward writing were in part due to "the absence of an environment conducive to writing" (p. 4). With the use of portfolio evaluations, skills checklists, surveys, and questionnaires, the researchers found three strategies would create positive student attitudes toward writing: implementation of writing workshop, whole group activities to enhance the writing process, and the creation of a safe and predictable environment. The study focused on a population of students in early childhood, first grade and third grade students. Pre and post treatment administrations of surveys were given.

The pre-treatment surveys revealed students dislike and discomfort with regard to writing and that skill levels, role models, and the classroom environment were factors that influenced subjects negative feelings. Even students who said they enjoyed writing found it difficult to do. Through implementation of a writing workshop, the researchers were able to observe a

"positive response" (p. 58). The workshop environment created an "atmosphere" where "children were willing to take risks and were enthusiastic about the writing process" (p. 58). Students even "looked forward to writer's workshop days" and were seen using free time to write (Boone et al., 1996, p. 59). One lingering concern from the overall positive conclusion was the inability to engage low-achieving students into the process. There was a "direct correlation between negative responses on the student survey and low-achieving writers" (p. 60). The researchers recognized an inevitability, that not all students will enthusiastically participate in a writing workshop. Though the number of reluctant writers was small, it would be irresponsible to ignore those students or to deny them the opportunity to discover writing through a workshop experience.

Why would students resist writing workshop? Brown (1998) viewed girls' defiance to participate in the classroom as an encouraging act of resistance. The researcher was concerned that well-founded studies measuring the loss of voice, the surrender to societal norms, did not recognize girls' resistance. The notion that girls' don't give up without a fight became the driving force for Brown's study. By interviewing and observing two groups of girls (one poor/working class group from a rural community and a middle/upper class group from a medium-sized city) Brown documented girls' anger. "Here, at the edge of adolescence, we argued, was the anger expressed, the resistant, knowing voices determined to be heard, the underground voices easily called forth by someone who would listen and take them seriously" (p. xi). The struggle and the resistance were seen to be "healthy pathways" for girls (p. xi).

Brown (1998) wanted to focus on the girls' who refused to succumb to societal pressures:

> Much attention of late has been given to girls' invisibility in schools, to sexual harassment in public spaces such as cafeterias, hallways, and on school playgrounds, to gender bias in classrooms, to losses in self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as to signs of psychological trouble, such as eating disorders, negative body image, and depression. We know and understand very little, however, about girls who resist these losses and retain their psychological resilience and invulnerability. (p. 3)

Girls in the study found strength in peer support. They resisted boys' physical demands, teachers' unfair treatment, and society's expectations of femininity. Female subjects found "creative" means of expression by inventing slang words or inventing new meanings for existing words. Brown (1998) described the girls' behaviors as "bold, self-protective actions, necessary for their survival" (p. 147). The notion of reclaiming voice through safe environments and attentive listeners could be connected with the creation of an ideal workshop classroom. Whether in writing or through speech, girls could rediscover themselves. They could resist and maintain an authentic sense of identity.

By examining 1000 successful women, Rimm (1999) hoped to discover what childhood influences could encourage girls toward achieving successful personal and professional lives. In school, subjects who were good at math entered fields that used math, same results with science. "The overall best subject for the total group of women was English" (p. 9). Women in the traditionally male careers believed themselves to be "strong-willed" while women in traditional professions labeled themselves "compliant" and "quiet" (p. 75). Higher percentages of the women attended single-sex schools and colleges than the total population, and the women's best subjects in elementary school "often predicted their eventual career choices" (pp. 104-5).

Early reading ability was present in many of the subjects as well as memories of writing. Positive experiences in writing "often directed their careers" toward professions that used writing (p. 107). Teachers were considered to be powerful influences by most of the women. Rimm (1999), while recommending multiple strategies regarding how to raise a happy and fulfilled daughter, also advised parents/guardians to encourage daughters' ability to write. The researcher laid out writing activities, modeled how to speak to a girl about her writing to re-enforce positive self-esteem, and explained how to create an environment which nurtured writing. Rimm unintentionally had described a writing workshop for girls, a substantial experience that could lead to successful careers "as well as provide important emotional expression for them during childhood and adolescence" (p. 148).

After reviewing the literature examining the relationship between girls' feelings of self-concept, self-esteem, and writing workshop, it was apparent that careful attention must be given to the unique ways in which girls' experience the world and how they speak and write about that world. Clearly, the literature points to the need to reinforce the development of positive self-concept and high self-esteem through opportunities to write with an authentic voice.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Sample

During the 1999-2000 academic year, 49 eighth grade girls completed pre and post treatment surveys that elicited their perceptions of peer and family relationships, school experiences, self-concept, self-esteem, and writing workshop. There was 100% return rate since no girls opted out of the study. Subjects came from a suburban, mostly Caucasian middle school with approximately 1100 students in grades six, seven, and eight. All students, boys and girls, completed the surveys during class time. Adequate time was allowed for everyone to respond.

Authorization to conduct the study was granted by the school district where parents/guardians, notified in writing that research was an integral part of school improvement, were asked to grant permission and were given the opportunity to refuse their students' participation. Guardians/Parents were also notified of the study at Open House and fall conferences. No parents/guardians asked for their student to be excluded from the study.

Subjects were 13 and 14 years old and came from five different language arts classes. All students who attended this school in seventh grade had exposure to a two to four week writing workshop unit in language arts. Only one respondent experienced an entire year of a writing workshop in seventh grade.

In the classrooms engaged in this study, eighth grade writing workshop was companioned with reading workshop and thematic units. There was no control group. All students received the same instruction, work time and met the

same deadlines. The workshop experience was infused into the classroom on the third day of school and continued the entire academic year.

Due to the nature of writing workshop, each student set and assessed individual goals within the parameters of minimum requirements. Minimum requirements included two conferences with the teacher/researcher plus one conference with someone else, and two (or one long) polished pieces each quarter. Adjustments were made in requirements and goals dependent on the individual needs of the learner. Abilities of the students ranged from diagnosed special needs students to talented and gifted students.

Materials

Survey. During the fall of 1999 and the spring 2000 school year, eighth grade language arts students completed a pre-treatment survey. (See Appendix.) Many survey prompts and questions came from AAUW (1990). Prompts and questions created by the researcher regarding writing workshop aligned with AAUW categories (perceptions of self-esteem, academic confidence, school experience, family and peer relationships). Surveys were administered on the fifth day of school, before reading or writing workshop had begun and at the end of May with the conclusion of the school year and the completion of portfolios. The survey instrument contained forced-choice questions and prompts on a Likert scale. Open-ended prompts allowed subjects to write personal thoughts and feelings. Survey items focused on social relationships (peer and family), school, self-concept, self-esteem, and writing workshop.

Survey Instructions. Respondents were asked to use school ID numbers and to circle their gender and age. Because a workshop teacher taught one class of seventh grade language arts, the eighth graders were asked whether or not

they had that teacher. Student responses to pre-treatment survey writing workshop questions could have been affected by a year-long versus a unit exposure. Only one student in the study had a year-long seventh grade writing workshop experience.

Students were asked to answer honestly and to feel free to change the forced-choice options or write explanations to clarify or rationalize their views. They were told the purpose of the survey was to measure the effects of writing workshop, a teaching methodology which had been used by the researcher for 11 years. In addition, the researcher explained the survey would not be part of students' grades and responses would be confidential. Open-ended questions provided the opportunity to present detailed responses relating to writing workshop. The last item was optional but gave students space to write any other comments regarding their writing workshop experience.

Design and Procedure

During the fall and spring of the 1999-2000 academic year, the researcher constructed a survey design to gather self-reported information from eighth grade girls with regard to writing workshop and its effect on self-esteem. A population of 49 girls was chosen for analysis by concentrating on only the females' surveys. Any female who was not present for both the pre-survey and post survey administration was eliminated from the sample.

Questions and prompts were taken with permission from AAUW (1990). Format of the forced-choice questions were modeled after the AAUW survey. The survey for this study differed from AAUW's formatting in the following ways:

- A choice of No Difference was added to questions regarding school.
- The survey concluded with open-ended questions.

- Questions regarding school subjects listed those courses in alphabetical order so the format would remain consistent and unbiased through out the survey.

Descriptive statistics analyzed the quantitative data sections and compared to AAUW's results using the subjects' mean scores for highest rating possible ("Always True"). Descriptive statistics were also used to examine prompts regarding writing workshop. Pre and post treatment survey items were tested for statistical significance by using an ANOVA test. Data for response choices were analyzed with descriptive statistics and frequency scores. Open-ended questions (qualitative data) were categorized by subject and theme.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Primary Evidence

This study yielded findings regarding girls' perceptions of self, their relationship with peers and family, and their experiences in school and writing workshop. Qualitative evidence from open-ended questions gave contextual information to support quantitative data results.

Pre and Post Survey Items Compared to AAUW Survey Results

A forced-choice, Likert scale was used on survey items regarding eighth grade girls' perceptions of general self-esteem, family importance, academic self-esteem, isolation, voice, and acceptance. Questions and prompts were taken from AAUW's survey (1990) of 3000 children from grades 4 through 10. AAUW administered the survey during September through November, 1990. The current study instrument was administered in September 1999 and May 2000.

Percentage of "Always True" responses for AAUW's general self-esteem prompts were compared to the pre and post treatment survey administrations of the current study. Results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

General Self-Esteem Percentage of "Always True" Responses

Survey Prompts	AAUW %	Pre %	Post %
I'm happy the way I am.	37	43	42
I like the way I look.	20	15	25
I like most things about myself.	25	37	30
Sometimes I don't like myself that much.	10	2	8
I wish I were somebody else.	7	0	2

A frequency distribution of girls' responses with regard to general self-esteem for this study's pre and post treatment survey responses was developed. A Likert scale provided options from "Always True" to "Always False." Each response was tallied. Results from subjects' pre and post treatment surveys have been shown in Table 2.

Table 2

General Self-Esteem Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I'm happy the way I am.	20	20	19	17	10	10	0	2	0	0
I like the way I look.	7	12	24	22	14	10	4	3	0	1
I like most things about myself.	18	13	25	26	6	5	0	0	0	0
Sometimes I don't like myself that much.	1	4	11	8	11	16	17	9	8	12
I wish I were somebody else.	0	1	4	1	10	14	15	14	20	19

Mean responses for frequencies reported in Table 2 were tabulated according to numerical values of responses. An ANOVA measured probability levels at .05. No statistical significance was found (See Table 3).

Table 3

General Self-Esteem Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
I'm happy the way I am.	49	48	4.213	4.125	0.750	0.890	.605
I like the way I look.	49	48	3.710	3.833	0.900	0.953	0.490
I like most things about myself.	49	44	5.224	5.694	2.600	2.815	.3899
Sometimes I don't like myself that much.	48	49	2.792	2.771	1.113	1.259	.915
I wish I were somebody else.	49	49	1.958	2.021	0.990	1.012	0.761

Table 4 demonstrated the percentage of "Always True" responses for AAUW's family importance prompts. Girls were asked to respond to the prompts on a Likert scale. Options for respondents ranged from "Always True" to "Always False." Results from AAUW were compared to the pre and post treatment survey administrations of the current study.

Table 4

Family Importance Percentage of "Always True" Responses

Survey Prompts	AAUW %	Pre %	Post %
I am an important member of my family.	51	51	51
I feel good about myself when I am with my family.	43	41	41
I'm an important person.	42	49	49

A frequency distribution for respondents' answers to AAUW prompts on family importance for this study's pre and post treatment was tallied. A Likert scale gave options from "Always True" to "Always False." Data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Family Importance Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I am an important member of my family.	25	25	11	15	8	6	2	2	3	1
I feel good about myself when I am with my family.	20	20	16	14	12	13	1	2	0	0
I'm an important person.	24	24	15	15	6	10	3	0	1	0

Data from girls' responses to family importance prompts was disaggregated. A Likert scale measured responses from "Always True" to "Always False." Means for frequencies reported in Table 4 were calculated. An ANOVA was set at the .05 alpha level. No statistical significance between the pre and post treatment survey was found. (See Table 6.)

Table 6

Family Importance Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
I am an important member of my family.	49	49	4.063	4.208	1.192	1.031	0.523
I feel good about myself when I'm with my family.	49	49	4.065	4.021	0.854	1.000	0.818
I'm an important person.	49	49	4.106	4.191	1.088	0.970	0.690

Girls' views regarding academic self-esteem were measured with percentage of Always True responses and compared with AAUW's findings. Options for response were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Always True" to "Always False." Data are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Academic Self-Esteem Percentage of "Always True" Responses

Survey Prompts	AAUW %	Pre %	Post %
I'm proud of the work I do in school.	26	27	24
My teachers are proud of me.	14	17	27
I am pretty good at a lot of things.	29	27	32
I am disappointed with my school grades.	5	0	2
My teachers always listen to my ideas.	16	33	31
I'm good at reading.	44	39	46

A frequency distribution of subjects' attitudes toward academic self-esteem pre and post treatment survey was developed and presented in Table 8. Girls responded along a Likert scale with five options ranging from "Always True" to "Always False." Academic self-esteem pre and post treatment responses were tallied.

Table 8

Academic Self-Esteem Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I'm proud of the work I do in school.	13	12	33	27	3	10	0	0	0	0
My teachers are proud of me.	8	13	34	25	5	11	0	0	0	0
I am pretty good at a lot of things.	13	14	30	26	5	4	0	0	0	0
I am disappointed with my school grades.	0	1	2	8	9	12	20	12	18	16
My teachers always listen to my ideas.	16	15	15	15	16	16	2	2	0	0
I'm good at reading.	19	22	22	17	6	8	2	1	0	0

Academic self-esteem was also examined with descriptive statistics. Means for frequencies depicted in Table 8 were calculated by giving numerical equivalents to survey responses. An ANOVA alpha level was set at .05. Statistical significance was found on the prompt "I'm disappointed with my school grades." (See Table 9.)

Table 9

Academic Self-Esteem Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
I'm proud of the work I do in school.	49	49	4.210	4.042	0.544	0.683	0.189
My teachers are proud of me.	47	49	4.043	4.042	0.550	0.713	0.995
I am pretty good at a lot of things.	48	44	4.188	4.313	0.607	0.624	0.322
I'm disappointed with my school grades.	49	49	1.917	2.333	0.846	1.155	0.047*
My teachers always listen to my ideas.	49	48	3.792	3.872	1.031	0.969	0.695
I'm good at reading.	49	48	4.210	4.234	0.800	0.813	0.877

A comparison between AAUW findings regarding feelings of isolation and the current study was made and presented in Table 10. Girls responded to the prompts and marked choices in a Likert scale. The percentage of "Always True" responses was tallied.

Table 10

Isolation Percentage of "Always True" Responses

Survey Prompts	AAUW %	Pre %	Post %
People don't really know the real me.	17	2	4
People don't know I have good ideas.	14	8	4
Other kids make me feel like I'm not good enough.	9	0	4
Teachers make me feel like I'm not good enough.	6	2	0

Further examination of the data regarding isolation occurred with a frequency distribution. Pre and post treatment survey responses with regard to isolation were tallied and listed according to the Likert choice given. Results of the survey are exhibited in Table 11.

Table 11

Isolation Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
People don't really know the real me.	1	2	8	7	14	16	14	13	11	11
People don't know I have good ideas.	4	2	8	4	23	25	4	15	9	3
Other kids make me feel like I'm not good enough.	0	2	5	5	11	8	18	19	14	15
Teachers make me feel like I'm not good enough.	1	0	1	3	5	6	12	15	30	24

Data from the subjects' responses was disaggregated to determine statistical significance. Means of frequency the distribution reported in Table 11 were tabulated. An ANOVA set significance at .05 alpha. No statistical significance was found between pre and post treatment surveys with regard to isolation. (See Table 12.)

Table 12

Isolation Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
People don't really know the real me.	48	49	2.468	2.458	1.100	1.071	0.965
People don't know I have good ideas.	48	49	3	2.833	0.989	0.975	0.408
Other kids make me feel like I'm not good enough.	48	49	2.213	2.354	1.041	1.229	0.547
Teachers make me feel like I'm not good enough.	49	48	1.604	1.729	0.917	0.917	0.506

Another category that AAUW measured was voice. Respondents chose options along a Likert scale. The percentage of "Always True" responses from AAUW was compared to pre and post treatment survey administrations. Data are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Voice Percentage of "Always True" Responses

Survey Prompts	AAUW %	Pre %	Post %
I speak up in class a lot.	18	8	10
I can make friends when I want to.	30	31	48
People think I'm quiet.	16	12	9

Responses to Likert scale options regarding voice were scored and frequency was listed. A frequency distribution showing subjects' responses is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Voice Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I speak up in class a lot.	4	5	14	12	16	18	13	13	2	1
I can make friends when I want to.	15	23	23	18	9	7	2	0	0	0
People think I'm quiet.	6	4	6	5	22	17	7	11	8	10

Girls' responses to voice prompts were also computed with descriptive statistics. Means of frequencies depicted in Table 14 were calculated according to assigned numerical values. An ANOVA set at .05 alpha found no statistical significance. (See Table 15.)

Table 15

Voice Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
I speak up in class a lot.	49	49	3.208	3.234	1.071	1.068	0.907
I can make friends when I want to.	49	48	4.021	4.319	0.812	0.726	0.062
People think I'm quiet.	49	47	2.875	2.532	1.196	1.177	0.162

The last category of AAUW's survey was feelings of acceptance. Girls responded to a five-point Likert scale from "Always True" to "Always False." The percentage of "Always True" responses is presented in Table 16. A comparison is made with the current pre and post treatment survey of "Always True" responses.

Table 16

Acceptance Percentage of "Always True" Responses

Survey Prompts	AAUW %	Pre %	Post %
I don't like to do things that make me feel different from my friends.	18	4	2
I don't like to work by myself.	12	4	12
I worry about other kids liking me.	24	16	16

Likert choices were tallied for the girls' responses on pre and post treatment surveys regarding feelings of acceptance. The frequency of responses to each prompt is reported in Table 17.

Table 17

Acceptance Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I don't like to do things that make me feel different from my friends.	2	1	11	8	21	20	13	16	2	4
I don't like to work by myself.	2	6	14	12	31	27	2	4	0	0
I worry about other kids liking me.	8	8	17	16	9	11	14	9	1	5

The data from girls' responses was disaggregated and represented in Table 18. Mean scores were calculated from Likert scale responses with regard to subjects' feelings of acceptance. An ANOVA comparing pre and post treatment survey responses found no statistical significance at alpha level .05.

Table 18

Acceptance Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
I don't like to do things that make me feel different from my friends.	49	49	2.979	2.710	0.911	0.922	0.151
I don't like to work by myself.	49	49	3.292	3.396	0.651	0.818	0.492
I worry about other kids liking me.	49	49	3.417	3.208	1.108	1.220	0.383

Pre and Post Survey Results on Perceptions of School

In addition to the AAUW (1990) survey prompts, the following areas were part of this study's surveys administered pre and post treatment. The eighth grade girls' attitudes toward school subjects, classroom environment, teacher encouragement, and feedback were measured.

The frequency distribution of girls' responses to pre and post treatment prompts regarding school subjects is presented in Table 19. Girls were asked to mark their favorite, second favorite, and least favorite school subjects. Each response was tallied.

Table 19

Attitudes Toward School Subjects Frequency Distribution

School Subject	Favorite		Second Favorite		Least Favorite	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Art	6	6	3	4	1	0
Computers	0	0	0	0	5	3
Family & Consumer Science	4	1	2	4	2	3
Foreign Language	11	7	9	10	1	0
Health	11	8	6	7	1	0
Language Arts	3	13	8	11	1	0
Music	3	3	0	0	0	0
Math	5	2	5	3	10	16
Physical Education	3	3	1	3	4	8
Reading	2	3	8	2	2	1
Science	1	1	1	2	5	3
Social Studies	0	2	3	1	8	13
Technology	0	0	2	2	8	2

Girls' attitudes toward classroom environment was measured with descriptive statistics. Prompts had response options of "Yes" and "No." Respondents were told at the time of both pre and post treatment survey administration they could modify any prompt or response. In this section of the survey, girls added a "Sometimes" response choice. Means were tabulated from the numerical values of frequency distribution. No statistical significance was

found between pre and post treatment survey responses. An ANOVA was run setting significance at an alpha level of .05. (See Table 20.)

Table 20

Attitudes Toward Classroom Environment Descriptive Statistics

Survey Questions	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Do you get called on as often as other boys and girls?	49	49	1.837	1.224	0.486	0.511	0.683
Do you sometimes feel like you know something but the teacher doesn't think you should know it?	49	48	1.551	1.458	0.647	0.504	0.434
Do you sometimes feel you have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you?	49	49	1.755	1.796	0.434	0.499	0.667
Do you raise your had and answer questions in class a lot?	49	49	1.673	1.714	0.658	0.645	0.757
Do you raise your hand in some classes more than others?	48	48	1.208	1.229	0.459	0.515	0.835
Do you like to talk and answer questions in class?	49	48	1.510	1.458	0.710	0.651	0.709
Do you like to ask questions in class?	49	49	1.591	1.551	0.705	0.647	0.766

Attitudes toward positive teacher encouragement were measured by three questions, each with different answering options. The question "Have you ever had a teacher who thought you could be really good at something and

encouraged you?" contained options of "Yes" or "No." Subjects who answered "Yes" then marked if the teacher was a "Man" or a "Woman." Students also wrote in "Both." A frequency distribution of girls' attitudes was scored. Results of subjects' attitudes toward positive teacher encouragement have been tallied and are exhibited in Table 21.

Table 21

Attitudes Toward Positive Teacher Encouragement Frequency Distribution

School Subjects	Pre	Post
Art	6	3
Computers	2	1
Family & Consumer Science	0	0
Foreign Language	2	2
Health	1	3
Language Arts	5	14
Math	5	7
Music	7	3
Physical Education	5	3
Reading	0	1
Science	3	2
Social Studies	3	1
Technology	2	1

Means for the frequencies presented in Table 21 were calculated using numerical values assigned to responses. An ANOVA, which set statistical

significance at .05 alpha, found no significant change between pre and post treatment surveys. (See Table 22.)

Table 22

Attitudes Toward Positive Teacher Encouragement Descriptive Statistics

Survey Questions	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Have you ever had a teacher who though you could be really good at something and encouraged you?	48	49	1.958	1.980	0.202	0.249	0.646
Was that teacher a man or a woman?	46	46	1.672	1.717	0.598	0.502	0.707

Attitudes toward teacher feedback on pre and post treatment surveys were exhibited in a frequency distribution. Subjects had the choices of "Boys," "Girls," or "No Difference." A majority of girls marked "No Difference" for all but a few of the questions. (See Table 23.)

Table 23

Attitudes Toward Teacher Feedback Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Boys		Girls		No Difference	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Who do teachers think are smarter?	1	1	17	5	30	42
Who do teachers give harder work to?	5	1	1	4	41	44
Who do teachers punish more often?	44	38	0	0	5	11
Who do teachers compliment or say nice things about more often?	1	0	21	24	27	24
Who do teachers like to be around more?	0	3	7	1	42	40
Who do teachers pay more attention to?	6	5	5	1	37	41
Who do teachers call on more often?	5	0	18	7	26	40

Descriptive statistics measuring girls' attitudes toward teacher feedback. Means from the frequency distribution presented in Table 23 were calculated from assigned numerical values. Questions gave respondents the choices of "Boys," "Girls," and "No Difference." The alpha level for an ANOVA was set at .05. Statistical significance was found in two of the questions: "Who do teachers think are smarter?" and "Who do teachers call on more often?" (See Table 24.)

Table 24

Attitudes Toward Teacher Feedback Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Who do teachers think are smarter?	48	48	2.604	2.854	0.536	0.412	0.012*
Who do teachers give harder work to?	47	49	2.750	2.898	0.636	0.368	0.163
Who do teachers punish more often?	49	49	1.204	1.490	0.612	0.869	0.063
Who do teachers compliment or say nice things about more often?	49	48	2.510	2.479	0.582	0.545	0.787
Who do teachers like to be around more?	49	44	2.857	2.939	0.354	0.242	0.186
Who do teachers pay more attention to?	48	47	2.646	2.771	0.699	0.627	0.359
Who do teachers call on more often?	49	47	2.449	2.833	0.647	0.377	0.0006***

Pre and Post Survey Results on Perceptions of Writing Workshop

The eighth grade girls' perceptions of writing workshop and writing competency were measured. A Likert scale provided response choices of "Yes" and "No." Girls added "Sometimes" as a response. Pre treatment surveys were administered on the third day of school before writing workshop was implemented.

Girls' attitudes toward writing were measured with two questions to determine affect of the writing workshop treatment. Response choices were "Yes" or "No. Some subjects wrote in a "Sometimes" response. Girls were then given the opportunity to select reasons why they did not like to write. A frequency distribution of responses is presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Attitudes Toward Writing Frequency Distribution

Survey Question	Yes		No		Sometimes	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Do you like to write?	33	31	13	14	1	2

Why do not like to write?	Pre	Post
I am not smart enough to do it.	0	0
My teachers don't think I'm good at it.	0	0
It doesn't have anything to do with real life.	0	0
It's not useful.	0	0
You have to work alone.	0	2
It's too hard.	1	0
I don't get good grades.	0	0
I don't think it's very interesting.	8	11
You don't get enough help from teachers.	0	0
You don't get to chose what to write. You have to do what the teacher says.	2	0

A frequency distribution recorded the girls' attitudes regarding the writing workshop environment for pre and post treatment. Response choices included "Yes" and "No." Many girls added "Sometimes" as a response choice. (See Table 26.)

Table 26

Attitudes Toward Writing Workshop Environment Frequency Distribution

Survey Questions	Yes		No		Sometimes	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
In writing workshop do you get called on as often as other girls and boys?	42	39	7	10	0	0
In writing workshop do you sometimes feel like you know something but the teacher doesn't think you know it?	16	10	32	39	0	0
In writing workshop do you sometimes feel you have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you?	9	5	39	43	1	1
In writing workshop do you raise your hand and answer questions in class a lot?	17	15	27	27	4	6
Do you like to talk and answer questions in writing workshop?	29	26	17	16	3	5
Do you like to ask questions in writing workshop?	26	23	19	23	4	3

To measure girls' attitudes toward the writing workshop culture (the environment) girls were given response options of "Yes" and "No," but girls added "Sometimes." Means were computed from the assigned numerical values; and an ANOVA, set at alpha .05, determined statistical significance for the question "In writing workshop do you sometimes feel you have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you?" (See Table 27.)

Table 27

Attitudes Toward Writing Workshop Environment

Survey Questions	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
In writing workshop do you get called on as often as other girls and boys?	49	49	1.163	1.184	0.373	0.391	0.792
In writing workshop do you sometimes feel like you know something but the teacher doesn't think you know it?	48	49	1.653	1.796	0.522	0.499	0.170
In writing workshop do you sometimes feel you have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you?	49	49	1.816	1.980	0.441	0.249	0.026*
In writing workshop do you raise your hand and answer questions in class a lot?	48	48	1.755	1.188	0.596	0.445	0.822
Do you like to talk and answer questions in writing workshop?	49	47	1.551	1.553	0.709	0.686	0.988
Do you like to ask questions in writing workshop?	49	49	1.633	1.592	0.727	0.643	0.769

Data related to girls' perception toward writing competency was disaggregated. The frequency of Likert scale responses on pre and post treatment surveys is presented in Table 28.

Table 28

Writing Competency Frequency Distribution

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
My writing workshop teacher is proud of me.	14	16	26	24	7	8	1	0	0	1
I'm proud of the work I do in writing workshop.	15	15	24	24	10	9	0	1	0	0
My writing workshop teacher makes me feel like I'm not good enough.	1	1	1	1	2	2	7	5	38	40
I'm disappointed with my writing workshop grades.	1	1	2	8	7	8	22	13	17	19
I'm comfortable sharing my writing with people.	8	6	12	19	20	15	5	5	4	4
I'm comfortable sharing my writing with my writing workshop teacher.	13	27	19	17	14	1	2	4	1	0
I feel good about myself when I'm writing.	10	12	22	18	14	16	3	3	0	0
I share my writing with my family.	4	7	9	7	19	11	10	11	5	13

Survey Prompts	Always True		Sort of True		Sometimes True/False		Sort of False		Always False	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
My writing workshop teacher listens to my ideas.	22	28	15	16	11	2	1	0	0	0
I speak up in writing workshop a lot.	2	3	10	10	19	20	15	12	3	1
I can express the real me in writing workshop.	11	10	7	15	19	19	10	3	1	0

Subjects' perceptions of writing competency were scored on a Likert scale with responses ranging from "Always True" to "Always False." Mean scores from the frequency distribution displayed in Table 28 were calculated. An ANOVA set at .05 alpha found statistical significance in two prompts: "I'm comfortable sharing writing with my writing workshop teacher" and "My writing workshop teacher always listens to my ideas." (See Table 29.)

Table 29

Perceptions of Writing Competency Descriptive Statistics

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
My writing workshop teacher is proud of me.	48	49	4.085	4.167	0.717	0.834	0.611
I'm proud of the work I do in writing workshop.	49	49	4.104	4.042	0.722	0.771	0.683
My writing workshop teacher makes me feel like I'm not good enough.	49	49	1.375	1.333	0.841	0.834	0.808
I'm disappointed with writing workshop grades.	49	49	1.958	2.146	0.922	1.185	0.389
I'm comfortable sharing my writing with people.	49	49	3.292	3.250	1.110	1.139	0.856
I'm comfortable sharing my writing with my writing workshop teacher.	49	49	3.813	4.292	0.938	0.922	0.013*
I feel good about myself when I'm writing.	49	49	3.813	3.750	0.842	0.887	0.724
I share my writing with my family.	47	49	2.978	2.729	1.164	1.380	0.348
My writing workshop teacher always listens to my ideas.	49	46	4.104	4.522	0.905	0.623	0.011*

Survey Prompts	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
I speak up in writing workshop a lot.	49	46	2.875	0.146	0.971	0.978	0.540
I can express the real me in writing workshop.	48	47	3.367	3.478	1.093	1.005	0.609

Girls' responses to questions regarding their attitudes toward writing workshop teacher feedback were collated in a frequency distribution. Each response was tallied as pre and post treatment. (See Table 30.)

Table 30

Attitudes Toward Writing Workshop Teacher Feedback Frequency Distribution

Survey Questions	Boys		Girls		No Difference	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Who does your writing workshop teacher think is smarter?	1	1	7	1	41	46
Who does your writing workshop teacher give harder work to?	3	0	0	1	45	48
Who does your writing workshop teacher compliment or say nice things about more often?	0	0	13	7	36	42
Who does your writing workshop teacher pay more attention to?	3	1	4	0	42	48
Who does your writing workshop teacher call on more often?	4	1	11	3	32	45
Who conferences with the writing workshop teacher more?	4	2	24	20	21	27
Who shares more writing pieces in class?	2	10	30	13	17	26
Who conferences with peers more?	12	2	15	14	22	33

Descriptive analysis of subjects' attitudes toward writing workshop teacher feedback were calculated from frequencies presented in Table 30. Girls were given response options of "Boys," "Girls" or "No Difference." An ANOVA set at alpha .05 found significance for three questions: "Who does your writing workshop teacher call on more often?" Who conferences with the teacher more?" and "Who conferences with peers more?" (See Table 31.)

Table 31

Attitudes Toward Writing Workshop Teacher Feedback Descriptive Statistics

Survey Questions	N		M		SD		p
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Who does your writing workshop teacher think is smarter?	49	48	2.816	2.938	0.441	0.320	0.126
Who does your writing workshop teacher give harder work to?	48	49	2.875	2.939	0.489	0.317	0.445
Who does your writing workshop teacher compliment or say nice things about more often?	49	49	2.735	2.837	0.446	0.373	0.223
Who does your writing workshop teacher pay more attention to?	49	49	2.796	2.959	0.539	0.286	0.064
Who does your writing workshop teacher call on more often?	47	49	2.596	2.418	0.648	0.334	0.003**
Who conferences with the teacher more?	49	49	2.347	2.592	0.631	0.574	0.0077***
Who shares more writing pieces in class?	49	49	2.286	2.327	0.577	0.774	0.768
Who conferences with peers more?	49	49	2.204	2.551	0.816	0.614	0.019*

Data Analysis

Pre and Post Survey Items Compared to AAUW Survey Results

General Self-Esteem. Percentage of "Always True" responses from middle school girls on the AAUW (1990) survey were used in comparison with the current study instrument. There was some difference between AAUW's results and the current study. Girls from the AAUW survey had higher percentages of "Always True" responses than both pre and post treatment administrations of the current study survey for two of the prompts ("Sometimes I don't like myself that much" and "I wish I were somebody else"). The current study had higher percentages of Always True responses in both the pre and post surveys than AAUW for "I'm happy the way I am" and "I like most things about myself." A dramatic shift up ten percent occurred with the prompt "I like the way I look." A shift down ten percent came with the prompt "I like most things about myself."

Higher percentages in the study could be due to the ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the subject population (mostly Caucasian, middle class). According to AAUW, African-American girls rank with higher self-esteem than Caucasian, Asian-American, and Latina girls. Perceived limited future opportunities affected by socio-economic status also created lower reported self-esteem in AAUW's findings.

Girls general self-esteem showed a consistency between pre and post "Always True" responses occurred with the prompts: "I'm happy the way I am" and "I wish I were somebody else." Dynamic change between pre and post survey "Always True" responses was found with two prompts. "I like the way I look" showed the study subjects having higher feelings of self-esteem at the conclusion of the study. A decrease in "Always True" responses fell in the

prompt "I like most things about myself."

Analysis of the data revealed no statistical significance, but positive movement where students' reporting moved from a negative perception to a positive perception was apparent in four of the prompts. More girls reported a mean of "Sometimes True" in the post survey prompt, "I like the way I look." "I like most things about myself," The prompt "Sometimes I don't like myself that much" received fewer "Sometimes True/Sometimes False" responses in the post survey. More girls reported "Sort of False" to "I wish I were somebody else." (See Tables 1, 2 and 3.)

Family Importance. The percentage of subjects' "Always True" responses in the study confirm the validity of AAUW's findings with regard to family importance. Response frequencies exhibited no change from pre to post treatment administration of surveys. A slightly higher percentage than AAUW of "Always True" responses accompanied "I'm an important person." Statistical analysis found no significant change from pre to post treatment administrations of the survey. On all three prompts, girls responded "Sort of True" as the mean.

A frequency distribution also showed the consistency of girls' responses. On all prompts, "Always True" received the highest number of responses for both pre and post survey administrations. (See Tables 4, 5 and 6.)

Academic Self-Esteem. A positive shift in percentage of "Always True" responses regarding academic self-esteem was evident. Responses in the post survey showed a change in number from the pre-treatment survey except for "I'm disappointed with my school grades" which had a slight change from zero to two percentage points. Pre-treatment survey data showed statistical significance for

four prompts ("My teachers are proud of me," "I am pretty good at a lot of things," "I am disappointed with my school grades," and "I'm good at reading) were comparable with AAUW's findings. Post-survey percentages of girls reporting "I'm proud of the work I do in school" were comparable to AAUW's data. Girls marking "Always True" to "My teachers are proud of me" and I am pretty good at a lot of things" rose ten or more percentage points from pre to post treatment surveys.

Statistical analysis found significance on one prompt ("I'm disappointed with my school grades"). Girls' mean responses moved from "Sort of False" to "Sometimes True/Sometimes False." The remaining five prompts showed girls' consistent responses. (See Tables 7, 8 and 9)

Isolation. Girls in the current study also demonstrated less isolated feelings than AAUW's survey subjects. Data coincided with earlier measures of general self-esteem, family importance, and academic self-esteem. No statistical significance was found from pre to post treatment surveys. Girls' mean scores fell in the "Sort of False" response category. A frequency distribution also reflected the positive feelings subjects in the current study had. Most frequent responses ranged from "Sometimes True/Sometimes False" to "Always False." The prompt "Other kids make me feel like I'm not good enough" resulted in a majority of "Sort of False" responses. "Teachers make me feel like I'm not good enough" had 54 of 97 girls marking "Always False." Overall, girls felt their peers and teachers recognized their true identities and treated them well. (See Tables 10, 11 and 12.)

Voice. Data regarding voice also was comparable to AAUW's findings. More middle school girls in the AAUW survey marked "Always True" for the prompt "I speak up in class a lot" than girls in the current study. The other two

prompts ("I can make friends when I want to" and "People think I'm quiet") received showed changes in percentage of "Always True" responses. A rise of 17 percentage points occurred in the post survey prompt "I can make friends when I want to." Also, fewer girls in the post treatment survey responded "Always True" to "People think I'm quiet." In general, girls were more confident in themselves at the end of eighth grade than at the beginning.

No statistical significance was found between pre and post surveys, and girls more frequently placed themselves in the positive response categories. Two prompts had girls marking "Sometimes True/Sometimes False" ("I speak up in class a lot" and "People think I'm quiet"). The data for those prompts showed girls hovering around the middle three response choices. A positive change occurred from "Sort of True" to "Always True" with "I can make friends when I want to." Girls in the study felt confident in their ability to make friends but did not have the same level of confidence with regard to speaking in class or in public. (See Tables 13, 14 and 15.)

Acceptance. Middle school girls in the AAUW survey reported more "Always True" responses than the current study girls in all three prompts regarding feelings of acceptance. Responses could be related to higher feelings of self-esteem as described in previous data discussion. An increase in percentage of "Always True" responses for study subjects occurred with "I don't like to work by myself." More girls marked "Always True" to that prompt in the post treatment survey. The change could be due to the cooperative nature of a writing workshop environment or the increased attention given to group work in other curricular areas. The other two prompts showed little or no difference between pre and post treatment survey results.

A descriptive statistical analysis revealed no significance. Girls mean scores stayed in the "Sometimes True/Sometimes False" categories for both pre and post survey administrations. A frequency distribution demonstrated girls' preference toward working collaboratively and being accepted by peers. Responses to all three prompts found the majority of responses in the "Sort of True," "Sometimes True/Sometimes False" or "Sort of False" options. (See Tables 16, 17 and 18.)

Pre and Post Survey Results on Perceptions of School

Attitudes Toward School Subjects. A frequency distribution placed the majority of pre-treatment survey marks for favorite subject as "foreign language" and "health." Post treatment survey responses put "language arts" as both favorite and second favorite. "Math" was the least favorite subject in both the pre and post treatment surveys. Girls' responses seemed to reflect their enjoyment of writing workshop. The language arts classroom as workshop was a new learning environment for all but one of the study subjects. Though not statistically significant, the dramatic change of subjects' attitudes toward language arts must be noted. The writing workshop environment in language arts was a positive experience for females in the study. (See Tables 19 and 20.)

Attitudes Toward Classroom Environment. When asked to respond to questions regarding classroom environment, the study girls had the option of marking "Yes" or "No." However, girls added "Sometimes" to their response choices. Mean scores showed girls did not respond "Yes" to the survey questions as often as they responded "No" or "Sometimes." Though no statistical significance was found, girls moved from "No" to "Sometimes" on the questions "Do you get called on as often as other boys and girls?" and "Do you sometimes feel like you know something but the teacher doesn't think you should know it?"

The girls' responses relate to the previous data regarding speaking up in class and whether or not others see the "real me." (See Table 20.)

Attitudes Toward Positive Teacher Encouragement. When asked "Have you ever had a teacher who thought you could be really good at something and encouraged you?" Frequency scores resulted in "Yes" responses from the subjects. A frequency distribution has presented subjects' attitudes regarding the question "What subject was that in?" "Music" received the highest frequency on the pre-treatment survey and "language arts" was the highest frequency on the post treatment survey. Fourteen of the subjects reported their language arts (the writing workshop) teacher was encouraging. A third question asked, "Was that teacher a man or a woman?" Mean scores revealed the girls felt most encouraged by a "Woman." No statistical significance was found between pre and post treatment survey responses. (See Tables 21 and 22.)

Attitudes Toward Teacher Feedback. The subjects were asked to respond "Boys," "Girls" or "No Difference" for seven questions concerning attitudes toward teacher feedback. "Boys" was the most frequent pre-survey answer for two questions ("Who do teachers punish more often?" and "Who does your writing workshop teacher punish more often?") Girls added written clarification to their responses on those questions. "Boys cause more trouble" or "Boys get into more trouble" were explanations given by subjects.

Three questions showed dramatic changes from pre to post surveys. Responses were more frequently marked as "Girls" but were changed to "No Difference" for the post survey ("Who do teachers think are smarter?" "Who do teachers compliment and say nice things about more often?" and "Who do teachers call on more often?"). "Girls" received no responses to the question

"Who do teachers punish more often?" According to the data, subjects perceived a school environment with gender-fair teacher feedback, but the data also showed the girls' strong beliefs that boys create disturbances in the classroom.

Descriptive statistics showed statistical significance in two of the survey prompts' mean scores. In four of the questions girls found "No Difference" in teacher feedback ("Who do teachers think are smarter?" "Who do teachers give harder work to?" "Who do teachers like to be around more?" and "Who do teachers pay more attention to?") This data was contrary to the literature surrounding teacher feedback in school.

Two prompts presented significant change. "Who do teachers think are smarter?" stayed in the "No Difference" category, but the amount of responses changed. Also, "Who do teachers call on more often?" started with "Boys" in the pre-surveys and moved to "No Difference" in the post surveys, a highly significant change indicating girls' experiences in the eighth grade were more gender fair than environments described in the literature. (See Tables 23 and 24.)

Pre and Post Survey Results on Perceptions of Writing Workshop

Attitudes Toward Writing. Of the respondents, 33 reported they liked to write in the pre treatment survey and 31 respondents liked to write in the post treatment survey. In the pre-treatment survey, only 13 girls marked "No" to the question "Do you like to write?" (14 in the post treatment survey). Subjects chose "It's not very interesting" as the most common reason for disliking writing in both the pre-treatment and post treatment surveys. A change, though not statistically significant, occurred with two of the response statements for not liking writing. In the pre-treatment survey one subject marked "It's too hard" and two marked "You

don't get to choose what to write. You have to do what the teacher says." Also, two girls added their own reasons: "It takes too long and it's more expressive saying things" and "I can't put my ideas on paper." None of these last four response choices were marked in the post treatment survey; isolation and lack of interest were the only reasons marked. (See Table 25.)

Attitudes Toward Writing Workshop Environment. When describing their attitudes toward the writing workshop environment, subjects generally marked the same responses in both the pre and post-treatment surveys on five of the questions. However, statistical significance was found with the question "In writing workshop do you sometimes have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you?" A significant number of girls reported "No." The girls found the workshop environment to be a place where the teacher allowed them to speak their minds if they so chose. Also, girls' responses changed from "Yes" to "No" for the question "Do you like to ask questions in writing workshop?" Though there was no statistical significance measured on this question, it seemed girls maintained their silence in the writing workshop environment much like the silencing in other classroom settings. (See Tables 26 and 27.)

Perceptions of Writing Competency. Girls had little experience with writing workshop at the time of the pre-survey. Only one out of the 49 girls had experienced a year of workshop. The others had only a three to four week unit in seventh grade language arts class.

A frequency distribution illustrated respondents' feelings regarding writing competency. Eight of the questions generally exhibited frequencies in the same response category for both the pre and post treatment surveys. Girls were extremely positive about their relationship with the writing workshop teacher -- responses moved from "Sort of True" to "Always True." However, they still were

reluctant to speak up in writing workshop and did not feel they were expressing their true selves. The girls also shared their writing with family only "Sometimes" in the pre-treatment survey, but marked "Always False" with more frequency in the post treatment response. This dramatic change could be further explained in the subjects' open-ended questions examining with whom they were willing to share their writing, how they felt about using a private writing voice and when they used the private writing voice.

Mean scores showed statistical significance in two of the prompts. Girls marked "Sort of True" in both the pre and post treatment surveys to "I'm comfortable sharing my writing with my writing workshop teacher," but the standard deviation was different enough to cause a statistically significant change. "My writing workshop teacher always listens to my ideas" also produced a statistically significant change.

No statistical change in responses ("Sort of True") occurred in three of the questions. Girls maintained their feelings of pride in their writing. They felt good when writing and believed their writing workshop teacher was proud of them. Those feelings were reflected in the "Sort of False" response to "I'm disappointed in my writing workshop grades." Girls felt comfortable in the writing process and its evaluation.

The data involving writing competency presented two issues with regard to writing competency: 1) the importance of a nurturing environment where the teacher was seen as supportive and 2) girls were still reluctant to divulge their true selves. Even in a supportive environment, girls were silent -- a theme that related directly to literature exploring female feelings of writing competency. (See Tables 28 an 29.)

Attitudes Toward Writing Workshop Teacher Feedback. Statistical significance was found in three of the eight questions regarding subjects' attitudes toward the feedback they received from their writing workshop teacher. "No Difference" was the most frequent response in all of the post treatment survey questions. Girls who perceived the writing workshop classroom as a gender-fair environment. Also, they predicted that "Girls" would share more writing in class and conference more with the teacher in the pre-treatment survey; however, post treatment survey responses were more frequent in the "No Difference" category. Subjects' overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward their writing workshop teacher reflected the true nature of a writing workshop culture, a place where all students would receive equal attention. (See Tables 30 and 31.)

Open-ended Responses

Description of Boys' and Girls' Writing. Subjects were given the opportunity to convey opinions and perceptions in written form (some girls did not respond to all questions). Only the post survey responses will be discussed since girls had such limited experience with writing workshop before eighth grade. Subjects' thoughts sorted naturally into four categories. Girls categorized boys' and girls' writing into four subgroups: quality, length, voice and content. Boys' and girls' writing pieces were regarded to be "just as good" as each other or boys' pieces were "hard to follow" and girls' pieces were "cool." Girls' pieces were described as longer than boys. Voice in boys' pieces was described, "like it was told by someone else," but girls' told the story about themselves or "what happened to them."

Content received the most responses. Twenty-five of the female subjects thought boys' pieces were about sports, action, "physical things," while ten subjects thought girls wrote unique, creative, dramatic stories about real-life. Genre included war and science fiction for the boys, but nine girls felt they wrote about dating, romance, mysteries and fairy tales -- "girlie things." Eight of the girls also credited themselves for successful use of poetry, diary and journaling. One female believed girls' writing was more "wide-ranged," while eight females thought girls' writing expressed feelings and included friends and family as characters or character composites.

Perceived Writing Strengths. Girls gave a variety of responses regarding their writing abilities. Many subjects (23 of the 49 girls) described themselves as imaginative, creative, able to use detail skillfully to create a "good" story or poem. A sense of accomplishment and pride in work was also seen in the responses. One girl wrote, "I like to read it over and see the kind of work I did." Another girl demonstrated pride in her skillful writing, "the drama of it all, catches the reader's eye." Nine of the subjects thought their strength was the ability to express true feelings and use an authentic voice. ". . . my writing is a way I can express the real me." Three of the girls described writing as "easier than I thought," "relaxing," and "fun." One girl admitted she didn't like to write.

Importance of Writing Workshop. Three themes emerged with the question regarding the importance of writing workshop. Of the respondents, 18 believed the purpose of writing workshop to be the improvement of writing, grammar and usage skills; 15 thought writing workshop provided the opportunity to express themselves; and eight girls believed writing workshop gave them time to use and improve their creativity. One girl wrote the purpose of writing workshop was "to

create an imagination." The concept of "writing what you want" and the opportunity to take time to write were important issues for three girls.

Use of Private Writing Voice. Examining the most frequent response, 29 of the girls reported they used a private writing voice at home in their diaries or journals or poetry. The need to express true emotions of happiness, sadness or anger was reflected in the responses of seven girls. Writing was important when they "had something to say." One girl thought it was important to write what she and her audience of transescent females "could relate to."

Sharing the Private Writing Voice. The majority of girls, 32, were willing to share private writing with their friends -- some specified only "close friends" or best friends." Sharing with their writing workshop teacher also was comfortable for 16 respondents and ranked higher than sharing with family, which received ten responses. Some girls were willing to share with other teachers; seven weren't willing to share at all; one girl wanted to share with "mostly anyone who will listen."

Feelings Attributed to Use of Private Writing Voice. The use of a private writing voice was a positive experience for 41 of the 49 subjects. They felt more "relaxed," "free and easy," "happy," "accomplished," and "sound." The need to express themselves, to release feelings and to be authentic was critical. One response explained writing made her feel "Good because you can get lost in your story and forget everything else. It's relaxing." Negative feelings attributed to the use of a private writing voice were shared in eight of the girls' words: "awkward," "scared," "uncomfortable," "ashamed," and "odd." "Because I don't want others to think it's corney." These girls described the fear of what others might think or say

about them after reading their writing. They were afraid of being perceived as different from their peers.

Feelings Attributed to Writing Workshop. Overall, girls feelings toward writing workshop mirrored their feelings of using a private writing voice. The idea of feeling "good" or "comfortable" appeared in the responses. Feelings of self-worth, of being "smart," "important," and "creative" were words subjects wrote in their reactions. One girl explained, "Important. All of my friends enjoy reading my stories." Girls who explained discomfort felt "bored," "strange," or "pressured." One wrote, "Irritated. I don't know what to write and don't think I am good at it!" The feelings attributed to writing workshop mirror girls' responses on whether or not they liked to write.

Optional Comments. Only sixteen of the girls responded to the last question. They were persuasive in their stances supporting writing workshop. One of the responses was, "I love it (writing workshop) never ever drop it, even though some people hate it, it gives you a chance to speak out to express yourself which some people feel uncomfortable talking about. They can write it" (Student A, 2000). Another subject showed pride in personal achievement. "I got a poem published in a contest! I really enjoyed writing workshop this year because my LA (language arts) teacher made me see a side of myself I never knew I had and I like it!" (Student B, 2000).

Girls who responded positively to the optional question insisted on not changing anything about the workshop: having the opportunity for free choice, conferencing and publishing. They wanted the workshop to continue. They were proud of their accomplishments and their abilities to express themselves in a safe environment.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Results

The results of this study mirror conclusions in the literature surrounding girls' educational experiences. Matching subjects' responses with AAUW's (1990) survey results justifies the reliability and validity of the study. Female subjects in the study had received no other changes in their educational setting or curriculum during eighth grade except for the writing workshop experience, so their responses confirm the positive effects of writing workshop upon transescent female self-concept, self-esteem and writing competency. During the course of the year, other teachers in the school setting did not receive any sensitivity training or any additional information regarding the education of females. Therefore, the results of the study showing a general positive effect of writing workshop on self-concept, self-esteem and writing competency are directly related to the influence of writing workshop. The null hypothesis presented in Chapter 1 has been disproved. Statistical significance as well as open-ended responses show a positive change in girls' feelings of self-esteem, self-concept and writing competency due to the use of writing workshop.

Comparison of Study to AAUW Survey Results. No statistical significance has been found between pre and post treatment administrations of the survey in the areas that parallel AAUW (1990) survey results. However, in the categories of general self-esteem, family importance, academic self-esteem, isolation, voice and acceptance, results from the current study are comparable to the findings of AAUW .

Though not statistically significant, it is important to note that girls in this study have overall higher feelings of self-esteem than the AAUW survey. Feelings of family importance echo the results of AAUW. The percentage of "Always True" responses to prompts show consistency from pre and post treatment surveys and align with AAUW's percentages. With regard to academic self-esteem, girls seem to have positive feelings toward their school grades. Since academic self-esteem is supported by general feelings of self-esteem and family importance, it is appropriate for subjects to show positive feelings toward their academic abilities. Female subjects also report feeling less isolated than AAUW's subjects and exhibit more confidence in making friends.

Overall, girls in the study have higher levels of self-concept and self-esteem than girls in the AAUW study. Since AAUW has used a national population with subjects from diverse backgrounds, data may not correspond with the current study's limited population of mostly Caucasian, suburban girls; therefore, it is logical that subjects in the current study report higher feelings of self-concept and self-esteem. The socio-economic status and environment of the girls in the study provide more comfort and more stability than girls in the AAUW study. Also, the AAUW study was conducted ten years ago. Perhaps, an awareness of gender-fair curriculum and teacher attitudes have had a positive influence on the educational experiences of girls. (See Tables 1 through 18.)

Attitudes Related to School Environment. Transescent girls' responses to school subject in the study also match results from AAUW (1990). In both studies, girls rank math as their least favorite school subject. Foreign language, and language arts are high on the list of favorite subjects. Subjects' responses could have been affected by the varied schedules of students. At the time of the pre-treatment administration, students had three days or less of reading and

Family and Consumer Science. A new teacher had taken over Technology in October, and not all students in eighth grade had the same exploratory courses (art, computers, Family and Consumer Science, Technology) or music (vocal and instrumental). Due to the timing of the pre-treatment survey, girls' responses could reflect their seventh grade school experiences or their first impressions of eighth grade.

After the writing workshop treatment, no girl had marked language arts as her least favorite subject. In fact, 44 of the girls in the post treatment survey listed language arts as their favorite or second favorite school subject. Other school subjects' rankings had remained consistent or dropped. Since writing workshop is a critical part of the language arts environment, results verify girls had an overwhelmingly positive experience in language arts with the workshop experience, incomparable to experiences in any other school subject for this particular group of females.

Girls' statistically significant change in responses with regard to teacher feedback corroborates a more gender-fair school environment, but the data run contrary to literature that discusses girls' general experiences in school. Girls' views that boys receive more disciplinary punishment and more compliments corresponds with school environment literature.

Data show the girls in the current study reported positively on factors relating to self-concept and self-esteem, but the data regarding their attitudes toward the classroom environment generally concur with the literature describing girls' experiences in school. Girls report the silencing they encounter in a classroom setting, but they recognize the positive influence of a female teacher in their lives. (See Tables 19 through 24.)

The Effects of Writing Workshop. Statistical significance has been found in some of the areas covering the writing workshop experience. Girls feel comfortable sharing with the writing workshop teacher, use an authentic and private voice to express feelings, appreciate the opportunity to choose writing topics and genre as well as recognize a gender-fair environment. Since the focus of this study is on the effects of writing workshop, results in this category are critical in determining the outcome of the study.

Only 14 of the girls portray negative feelings with regard to their writing workshop experience. They attribute attitudes to feelings of inadequacy and awkwardness. These girls do not think themselves capable of writing or are afraid of peer reaction to their writing. Overwhelmingly though, girls find the writing workshop experience to be positive. They have explored new means of expression and have found an attentive audience in friends, their teacher or themselves. Interestingly, many girls are reluctant to share writing with family members. Though the girls do not explain why they aren't comfortable sharing writing with family, the possibility relates to the fact that subjects wrote about true feelings and real-life situations. Perhaps girls felt family members would not appreciate such openness, or girls felt the need to maintain a false image within the family dynamic.

High feelings of writing competency probably relate to the fact that an attentive audience and a supportive environment has enabled girls to write. They are able to find their own voice through writing. Unfortunately, the inability to share out loud, to ask questions in class continues to illustrate the silencing of girls in school. Subjects have found authentic means of expression, but still do not find comfort in speaking. Though the writing workshop environment provides

a means of authentic written expression within a nurturing environment, the environment is not perceived to be a safe place for girls to speak. One-on-one or small group conversations are still the means of expression girls' choose. The workshop environment (one class period a day for nine months) is not long enough for girls to achieve a speaking confidence. In that sense, girls still conform to the societal pressure of silence. However, at least in a writing workshop, girls are able to find and express their voices through writing. (See Tables 25 through 31.)

Recommendations

Provide Training for Educators. An examination of the literature and data from this study show that although progress has been made in the education of girls, there still exists a need to create learning environments where girls feel valued. Silencing of girls' voices in classrooms occurs when girls feel less capable that their male peers or when they feel their opinions will not receive equal treatment. Alternative teaching strategies which allow for longer wait time (a chance for girls to process their verbal responses), small group discussion or writing will give girls the opportunity to share without fear of ridicule.

In addition, when educating transescent females, the effects of societal expectations must be taken into consideration. Girls often have lived in two worlds with two identities -- public and private. Educators must be trained to recognize and to address the pressures placed on girls to behave like "good girls." Instead of being critical and persuading girls to conform, educators should both acknowledge those girls who speak out in class and should utilize strategies that encourage girls who don't speak out to raise their hands and volunteer.

Quieting boys' voices, not responding to the first hand raised or giving positive reinforcement to blurted answers can give girls gender-fair opportunities to participate in classroom discussion. Female teachers can have a more dramatic impact on affecting girls' voice. As role models, female teachers can demonstrate how girls can learn to speak out.

Finally, educators should receive information regarding female development and how it differs from male development. The literature explains how girls' identity is tied to their relationships. The current study also reflects that identity connection. Girls are willing to share their writing with a safe audience, one that will not judge or condemn. The need for girls to maintain relationships should be considered when developing classroom assignments and activities. Young adolescent girls will generally not want to appear different from friends and will not resist pressures if the consequence could be the loss of a relationship.

Design a Learning Environment Which Reflects the Lives of All Students. In order for girls to fully participate in their education, teachers need to create a gender-fair environment where all voices and students receive opportunities to share and learn. When developing curriculum, educators should take notice of the inclusion of female experiences. Girls should see themselves and their lives reflected in curricula and classroom activities should reflect their real-life experiences.

Create a Gender-Fair Learning Environment. Though AAUW's (1990) findings occurred ten years ago, much of the data has continued to ring true. In educational settings, the teacher and the learning environment can be seen as the critical components to the development of transescent girls' self-concept and self-esteem. The creation of a workshop environment in any subject area

provides a culture of respect and authenticity which nurtures growth in girls' self-confidence and self-worth. Students collaborating in small groups, having voice and choice in their studies, becoming a community of learners fosters the development of high self-esteem. Teaching strategies and communication skills allowing all students to fully participate in the educational setting would be beneficial to both girls and boys. Students who create their own culture have a stake in how that culture functions. They find personal relevance and their education has personal meaning.

Use a Writing Workshop Approach. The focus of this study (the effects of writing workshop on the self-concept, self-esteem and writing competency of eighth grade girls) illustrates the positive influence of writing workshop. A workshop creates a community of learners where all students have voice and choice in their topic selection, writing style, or genre. With the guidance of the writing workshop teacher, students will develop a voice and a means of expression not always shown to the public. Writing will become an outlet for feelings, an account of everyday events and a developmentally appropriate learning tool where girls "write their worlds." A writing workshop allows for the developmental differences of boys and girls, gives girls the opportunity to share their thoughts without fear of reprisal and allows girls to break their educational silence. A workshop approach creates an environment which acknowledges the current research on girls' educational experiences and promotes a change from the status quo. Writing workshop delivers the kind of educational experiences conducive to girls' developmental learning styles.

Implications for Further Research

The findings of this study and implementation of the recommendations described in the previous section have implications for further research. First of

all, a correlation study should be conducted to confirm the results of this study. Secondly, the effects of writing workshop on the self-concept, self-esteem, and writing competency of boys should be studied. Also, future study should include populations beyond eighth graders in a suburban school setting. This study deals with a small sample; widening the population diversity would provide more generalizable data.

Additional research should be conducted with regard to the classroom environment -- to what degree are societal pressures interfering with learning? Also, as educators learn more about the differences in female and male development and the impact of those differences on learning, continuous study should determine if progress is being made in the creation of gender-fair learning environments.

In summary, with the movement toward a more integrated methodology to learning of subject matter several questions remain:

- How do writing and the workshop experience impact other courses of study?
- Can a workshop experience in other academic areas be developed?
- Will a workshop experience in other school subject areas yield positive data reflecting higher self-concept and self-esteem?

Conclusion

> The mind working alone produces thought; the heart produces feeling; the tongue makes speech and the hand in isolation makes scribble: all four together create voice. (Hewitt as quoted in Lane, 1993, p. 157)

One of the basic tenets of writing workshop is that given the opportunity to write freely, students will develop a personal voice. It is assumed a workshop atmosphere is democratic in nature and supports a free exchange of ideas, styles, and genre. However, it is apparent that girls who have been socialized into gender roles early and consistently will not naturally use their own voice. They must be encouraged and sometimes taught how to rediscover that voice while the classroom is carefully monitored for gender stereotypes, peer pressure and silence. Hood (1990) reflects on the political reality of classroom pressures:

> We take for granted that our schools are communities, when, in fact, they're merely institutions that can become communities only when we work at it. But, with proper attention to all the individuals within the school, we can create an experience for students that demonstrates what it means to be a compassionate, involved citizen. For it is only within a community, not an institution, that we learn how to hold fast to such principles as working for the common good, empathy, equity, and self respect. (as cited in AAUW, 1992, p.2)

For girls to truly feel a part of the classroom community they must feel free to express their true selves, not create a false one. A false sense of self, a public mask, simply encourages silence.

Increasingly, girls have been inventing public ways to express themselves

outside of the classroom setting. Without writing workshop opportunities in school, girls are going elsewhere to tell their stories. After reading Pipher's (1994) book, Reviving Ophelia, Shandler (1999), a seventeen-year-old, has granted girls a chance to speak for themselves. Shandler solicited writing from girls and received 815 manuscripts. She edited and categorized the pieces according to chapter themes: "The Body Under Assault," "Family Matters," "The Best and Worst of Friends," "Touched by Desire," and "Overcoming Obstacles and Coming into our Own."

Shandler's mission in collating girls' voices is stated as, "Reviving Ophelia had been a gift to us, but it had also sold us short. If Ophelia is to be revived then it must be done by the collective voice and actions of Ophelias everywhere" (1997, p. xiii). Shandler's point is valid. When discussing girls' lives and experiences, their voices should be heard in their own words. Through Shandler's work, Ophelia Speaks, female authors are given permission and opportunity to describe their turmoils and triumphs. Their voices ring loud and clear. "Yeah, I'm standing up in the middle, I'm laughing and talking, and everyone is listening. Score one for the Revolution" (Sarah Bright as cited in Shandler, 1999, p. 278).

Recently, a new forum has emerged, giving girls freedom to express themselves in their own words. The "zine" (slang for magazine) revolution gives girls the opportunity to write, uncensored, and pass their hopes, dreams and fears on to a receptive audience. Zines are "a grass roots approach to publishing" where girls are "free to discuss their realities" (Green & Taormino, 1997, pp. xi-xiii). Web sites like Geek Girl, Cyber Grrl, Gurl, and Fat Girl have been launched over the Internet, but individually produced zines are still distributed on the street. The zine revolution has given girls a chance to reclaim

their voices. Authoring and publishing zines has given girls writing workshop opportunities not afforded them in school. There is an engaged audience ready to read and respond, a forum for open discussion and a chance to search for an authentic self without social recriminations. Because of their audience these girls have a sense of belonging and the assurance that their voices are being heard.

Belonging and being heard give girls validation, they fit in and perceive themselves to be intelligent. These two factors related directly to Caissy's (1994) three contributing factors which lead adolescents to feel inferior: "unattractiveness, having few or no friends and perceiving oneself as unintelligent" (p. 41). Witknee, a zine author, writes about the self-validation that comes with zine production:

> Doing a zine is very egotistical, it is creating something and saying, 'here read this, i have something of value to say. there is nothing wrong with having an ego, mind you. it is great for one's self-esteem to print up their thoughts and opinions and pass it on to others. i encourage it for everyone (as cited in Green & Taormino, 1997, p. 141).

Though educational discourse over the past 30 years has included the issue of girls' inclusion, many issues need further study and study conclusions need implementation. Could writing workshop afford girls with the opportunity for self discovery? According to the literature, writing is an effective means for girls to express their thoughts and feelings, to discover themselves. If classroom settings are established which include and validate girls' writing -- true democracies, then girls will feel less isolated and more likely to actively participate. Active participation, replacing silence creates confidence and heightened self-worth. Girls need to feel connected and valued.

If educators are aware of social, emotional, and political pressures on girls that influence their behaviors and writings, a writing workshop seems a promising place for transescent girls to begin to rediscover themselves. "If girls are to succeed, we cannot ignore their need to voice what they know, and the ways authentic speech connects them to themselves and those they trust" (Bishop, 1996, p. 15). Without true inclusion in learning environments, girls will continue their silence, muzzled by the continuation of a system which refuses to hear their voices.

Through writing Katrina, the eighth grade girl quoted in Chapter 1, has discovered her notebook is "the safest place for her to speak" (Bishop, 1996, p. 13). Finding and using her authentic voice gives value to Katrina's existence as a human being -- her first step toward higher self-worth. To this day, Katrina continues to create and share her writing, calling it her "means of survival."

Lucy Caulkins, a renown author in the teaching of writing profession, explains the fundamental need for writing in the following passage:

> As human beings we have a deep need to represent our experience. By articulating our experience, we reclaim it for ourselves. We need to make our truths beautiful. This is why early peoples inscribed their stories on stony cave walls with pictographs. It is why my closets are filled with boxes of musty old journals. It is why I found pages of poetry under my stepdaughter Kira's mattress when she went off to college. It is why my four-year-old son, Evan, uses magic markers, pens, lipstick, and pencils to leave his mark on bathroom walls, on the backs of old envelopes, on his brother's charts and drawings. These markings give Evan a way to hold onto his world, to be instructed and moved by what he finds in it. As John

> Cheever explains, 'When I began to write, I found this was the best way to make sense out of my life." (Caulkins, 1994, p. 9)

Making sense out of their lives is imperative for the full development of young girls and women. The opportunity to speak for themselves either through written or oral means is a critical step for transescent girls to rediscover and present an authentic self.

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Appendix

PRE/POST WRITING WORKSHOP SURVEY

ID: _____

GENDER: Male Female

AGE: 11 12 13 14 15 16

Did you have Mr. Spencer for 7th grade language arts? **YES** **NO**

1. Circle your favorite subject in school (only one).

art	language arts	reading
computers	music	science
family and consumer science	math	social studies
foreign language	physical education	technology
health		

2. Circle your second favorite subject in school (only one).

art	language arts	reading
computers	music	science
family and consumer science	math	social studies
foreign language	physical education	technology
health		

3. Circle your least favorite subject in school (only one).

art	language arts	reading
computers	music	science
family and consumer science	math	social studies
foreign language	physical education	technology
health		

4. Do you like to write? **Yes** **No: Circle one answer that best explains why you do not like writing.**

I am not smart enough to do it.

My teachers don't think I'm good at it.

It doesn't have anything to do with real life.

It's not useful.

You have to work alone.

It's too hard.

I don't get good grades.

I don't think it's very interesting.

You don't get enough help from teachers.

You don't get to choose what to write. You have to do what the teacher says.

For each question, check the box that best describes how you feel.

	always true	**sort of true**	**sometimes true/ sometimes false**	**sort of false**	**always false**
5. I like most things about myself.					
6. I don't like to work by myself.					
7. My teachers are proud of me.					
8. My writing workshop teacher is proud of me.					

	always true	sort of true	sometimes true/ sometimes false	sort of false	always false
9. I worry about other kids liking me.					
10. I'm good at reading.					
11. I like the way I look.					
12. I am pretty good at a lot of things.					
13. I wish I were somebody else.					
14. I'm proud of the work I do in school.					
15. I'm proud of the work I do in writing workshop.					
16. I don't like to do things that make me feel different from my friends.					
17. I can make friends when I want to.					
18. I'm happy the way I am.					
19. Teachers make me feel like I'm not good enough.					
20. My writing workshop teacher makes me feel like I'm not good enough.					
21. I'm disappointed with my school grades.					

	always true	sort of true	sometimes true/ sometimes false	sort of false	always false
22. I'm disappointed with my writing workshop grades.					
23. People don't really know the real me.					
24. I am an important member of my family.					
25. People think I'm quiet.					
26. People don't know I have good ideas.					
27. I'm comfortable sharing my writing with people.					
28. I'm comfortable sharing my writing with my writing workshop teacher.					
29. I feel good about myself when I'm writing.					
30. I feel good about myself when I'm with my family.					
31. I share my writing with my family.					
32. Other kids make me feel like I'm not good enough.					
33. I'm an important person.					

	always true	sort of true	sometimes true/ sometimes false	sort of false	always false
34. Sometimes I don't like myself that much.					
35. My teachers always listen to my ideas.					
36. My writing workshop teacher always listens to my ideas.					
37. I speak up in class a lot.					
38. I speak up in writing workshop a lot.					
39. I can express the real me in writing workshop.					

For each question, circle YES or NO.

40. Do you get called on as often as other boys and girls? **YES** **NO**

41. In writing workshop do you get called on as often as other girls and boys? **YES** **NO**

42. Do you sometimes feel like you know something but the teacher doesn't think you know it? **YES** **NO**

43. In writing workshop do you sometimes feel like you know something but the teacher doesn't think you know it? **YES** **NO**

44. Do you sometimes feel you have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you? **YES** **NO**

45. In writing workshop do you sometimes feel you have things to say and the teacher doesn't let you? **YES** **NO**

46. Do you raise your hand and answer questions in class a lot? **YES** **NO**

47. In writing workshop do you raise your hand and answer questions in class a lot? **YES** **NO**

48. Do you raise your hand in some classes more than others? **YES** **NO**

49. Do you like to talk and answer questions in class? **YES** **NO**

50. Do you like to talk and answer questions in writing workshop? **YES** **NO**

51. Do you like to ask questions in class? **YES** **NO**

52. Do you like to ask questions in writing workshop? **YES** **NO**

For each question, circle BOYS or GIRLS or NO DIFFERENCE.

53. Who do teachers think are smarter? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

54. Who does your writing workshop teacher think is smarter? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

55. Who do teachers give harder work to? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

56. Who does your writing workshop teacher give harder work to? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

57. Who do teachers punish more often? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

58. Who does your writing workshop teacher punish more often? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

59. Who do teachers compliment or say nice things about more often? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

60. Who does your writing workshop teacher compliment or say nice things about more often? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

61. Who do teachers like to be around more? **BOYS** **GIRLS** **NO DIFFERENCE**

62. Who does your writing workshop teacher like to be around more? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

63. Who do teachers pay more attention to? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

64. Who does your writing workshop teacher pay more attention to? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

65. Who do teachers call on more often? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

66. Who does your writing workshop teacher call on more often? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

67. Who shares more writing pieces in class? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

68. Who writes the best pieces? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

69. Who conferences with the teacher more? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

70. Who conferences with peers more? **BOYS GIRLS NO DIFFERENCE**

71. Have you ever had a teacher who thought you could be really good at something and encouraged you?

NO **YES**

72. What subject was that in? (circle one)

art music

computers physical education

family and consumer science

foreign language reading

health science

language arts social studies

math technology

73. Was that teacher a man or a woman?

MAN WOMAN

Please complete the following sentences:

74. Boys' writing pieces are:

_____

_____

75. Girls' writing pieces are:

_____

_____

76. The thing I like about my own writing pieces is:

_____

_____

77. The importance of writing workshop is:

_____

_____

78. I use my private writing voice when:

_____

_____

79. I'm comfortable sharing my private writing voice with:

_____

_____

80. Using my private writing voice makes me feel:

_____

WHY?_____

_____

81. Writing workshop makes me feel:

_____

WHY?_____

_____

(Optional) Any other comments about writing workshop?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____